CHAPTER 5
DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Military forces conduct defensive operations only until they gain sufficient strength to attack. Though the outcome of decisive combat derives from offensive actions, leaders often find it is necessary, even advisable, to defend. Once they make this choice, they must set the conditions of the defense for friendly forces to destroy or fix the enemy while they prepare to seize the initiative and return to the offense. A thorough understanding of the commander's intent is especially critical in defensive operations. These operations demand precise integration of combat support and combat service support elements with combat elements, even at the platoon level. The immediate purpose of all defensive operations is to defeat an enemy attack and gain the initiative for offensive operations. The platoon may also conduct the defense to gain time, retain key terrain, facilitate other operations, preoccupy the enemy in one area while friendly forces attack him in another, erode enemy forces at a rapid rate while reinforcing friendly operations, and set the conditions for follow-on forces or follow-on operations.

Section I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEFENSE

The characteristics of the defense (preparation, security, disruption, massing effects, and flexibility) are the planning fundamentals for the BFV infantry platoon. To ensure the success of the defense, the platoon leader must understand the characteristics of the defense and apply troop-leading procedures during planning and preparation of the operation.

5-1. PREPARATION

The defender arrives in the battle area before the attacker. As the defender, the platoon must take advantage of this by making the most of preparations for combat in the available time. By thoroughly analyzing the factors of METT-TC, the platoon leader gains an understanding of the tactical situation and identifies potential friendly and enemy weaknesses.

5-2. SECURITY

The goals of the platoon's security efforts are normally tied to the company team efforts. These efforts include providing early warning, destroying enemy reconnaissance units, and impeding and harassing elements of the enemy main body. The platoon will typically continue its security mission until directed to displace.

5-3. DISRUPTION

Defensive plans vary with the circumstances, but all defensive concepts of the operation aim at disrupting the attacker's synchronization. Counterattacks, indirect fires, obstacles, and the retention of key terrain prevent the enemy from concentrating his strength against

selected portions of the platoon's defense. Destroying enemy command and control vehicles disrupts the enemy synchronization and flexibility.

5-4. MASSING EFFECTS

The platoon must concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time if it is to succeed. He must obtain a local advantage at points of decision. Offensive action may be a means of gaining this advantage. The platoon leader must remember that this refers to the effects of combat power, not just numbers of soldiers and weapon systems.

5-5. FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility is derived from sound preparation and effective command and control. The platoon must be agile enough to counter or avoid the attacker's blows and then strike back effectively. Flexibility results from a detailed analysis of the factors of METT-TC, an understanding of the unit's purpose, and aggressive reconnaissance and surveillance. Supplementary positions on a secondary avenue of approach may provide additional flexibility to the platoon.

Section II. SEQUENCE OF THE DEFENSE

As part of a larger element, the platoon conducts defensive operations in a sequence of integrated and overlapping steps. This section focuses on the following steps within the sequence of the defense:

- Reconnaissance, security operations, and enemy preparatory fires.
- Occupation.
- Approach of the enemy main attack.
- Enemy assault.
- Counterattack
- Consolidation and reorganization.

5-6. RECONNAISSANCE AND SECURITY OPERATIONS AND ENEMY PREPARATORY FIRES

Security forces must protect friendly forces in the main battle area (MBA) and allow them to prepare for the defense. The goals of a security force include providing early warning, destroying enemy reconnaissance elements (within their capability), and possibly disrupting enemy forward detachments or advance guard elements. During this step, the platoon may be attached to a larger element or remain with the parent company team to conduct counter-reconnaissance. Additionally, the platoon conducts security operations as part of the company team defensive plan by conducting patrols or occupying OPs to observe named areas of interest (NAI).

a. During this step, the platoon may be required to provide guides to the passing security force and may be tasked to close the passage lanes. The platoon, as part of a larger force, may also play a role in shaping the battlefield. The task force or brigade commander may position the team to deny likely enemy attack corridors, thus enhancing flexibility and forcing enemy elements into friendly engagement areas.

b. When not conducting security or preparation tasks, the company team, and in turn the platoon, normally will occupy hide positions to avoid possible enemy artillery preparation.

5-7. OCCUPATION

During this step the platoon plans, reconnoiters, and occupies the defensive position. This includes movement from one location to the defensive location and is normally led by a quartering party that clears the defensive position and prepares it for occupation by the company team. The task force establishes security forces, and the remaining forces prepare the defense. To facilitate maximum time for planning, occupying, and preparing the defense, leaders and soldiers at all levels must understand their duties and responsibilities, to include priorities of work (usually covered in the WARNO or by a unit SOP).

a. Occupation and preparation of the defense (see Section IV of this chapter) site is conducted concurrently with the TLP and the development of the engagement area (if required). The platoon occupies defensive positions in accordance with the company team commander's plan and the results of the reconnaissance. To ensure an effective and efficient occupation, each BFV and squad moves to the marker used by the reconnaissance element to mark friendly positions, or a guide leads them in. These tentative positions are entered on the operational graphics. Once in position, each squad leader and BC checks his position location. As the platoon occupies its positions, the platoon leader manages the positioning of each squad and vehicle to ensure they locate IAW the tentative plan. If the platoon leader notes discrepancies between actual positioning of the squads or vehicles and his plan, he makes the corrections. The platoon leader must personally walk the positions to ensure that everyone understands the plan and that the following are in accordance with the plan:

- Weapons orientation.
- Vehicle positions.
- Weapons squads' positions.
- Rifle squads' positions.

Each squad leader ensures he knows the location of the platoon leader and platoon sergeant for command and control purposes.

b. When the occupation is complete, subordinate leaders can begin to develop their sector sketches (Appendix H) based on the basic fire plan developed during the leader's reconnaissance. Positions are improved when the direct fire plan is finalized and proofed. In addition to establishing the platoon's primary positions, the platoon leader and subordinate leaders normally plan for preparation and occupation of alternate, supplementary, and subsequent positions in accordance with the company order. The following are tactical considerations for these positions.

(1) The following characteristics and considerations apply for an alternate position:

- Covers the same avenue of approach or sector of fire as the primary position.
- Is located slightly to the front, flank, or rear of the primary position.
- Is positioned forward of the primary defensive positions during limited visibility operations.
- Normally is employed to supplement or support positions with weapons of limited range, such as dismounted infantry positions.

(2) The following characteristics and considerations apply for a supplementary position:

- Covers an avenue of approach or sector of fire different from those covered by the primary position.
- Occupied based on specific enemy actions.

(3) The following characteristics and considerations apply for a subsequent position:

- Covers the same avenue of approach and or sector of fire as the primary position.
- Is located in depth through the defensive sector.
- Is occupied based on specific enemy actions or conducted as part of the higher headquarters scheme of maneuver.

5-8. APPROACH OF THE ENEMY MAIN ATTACK

As this step begins, the brigade engages the enemy at long range using indirect fires, electronic warfare, and CAS. The goal is to use these assets and disrupting obstacles to shape the battlefield and or to slow the enemy's advance and disrupt his formations, leaving him more susceptible to the effects of CS weapons. As the enemy's main body echelon approaches the task force engagement area, the task force may initiate indirect fires and CAS to weaken the enemy through attrition. At the same time, the brigade's effort shifts to second-echelon forces, depending on the commander's intent. Platoons cease security patrolling and usually bring OPs back into the defense. Friendly forces will occupy their actual defensive positions before the enemy reaches direct fire range. Positions may be shifted in response to enemy actions or other tactical factors.

5-9. ENEMY ASSAULT

During this step, enemy forces attempt to fix friendly forces and complete their assault. During execution of the defense, friendly forces attempt to mass effects of fires to destroy the assaulting enemy. The platoon leader determines if the platoon can destroy the enemy from its assigned positions.

a. If the answer is YES, the platoon continues to fight the defense.

(1) The platoon leader continues to call for indirect fires as the enemy approaches. The platoon begins to engage the enemy at maximum effective range and attempts to mass fires and initiate them simultaneously to achieve maximum weapons effects. Indirect fires and obstacles integrated with direct fires should disrupt the enemy's formations, channel him toward engagement areas, prevent or severely limit his ability to observe the location of friendly positions, and destroy him as he attempts to breach tactical obstacles.

(2) Leaders control fires using standard commands, pyrotechnics, and other prearranged signals (Appendix G). The platoon increases the intensity of fires as the enemy closes within range of additional weapons. Squad leaders work to achieve a sustained rate of fire from their positions by having buddy teams engage the enemy so that both soldiers are not reloading their weapons at the same time. In controlling and distributing fires, the platoon and squad leaders consider—

- Range to the enemy.
- Priority targets (at what to fire, when to fire, and why).
- Most dangerous or closest targets.

- Shifting to concentrate direct fires either independently or as directed by higher headquarters.
- Ability of the platoon to engage dismounted enemy with enfilading, grazing fires.
- Ability of the antiarmor weapons to achieve flank shots against enemy vehicles.

(3) The enemy closes on the platoon's protective wire.

- Machine guns and squad automatic weapons fire along interlocking principle directions of fire or final protective lines as previously planned and designated. These may include BFV weapon systems or the platoon's M240Bs. Other weapons fire at their designated principle direction of fire (PDF). Grenadiers engage the enemy with M203 grenade launchers in dead space or as the enemy attempts to breach protective wire.
- The platoon leader requests final protective fires if they have been assigned in support of his positions.

(4) The platoon continues to defend until it repels the enemy or is ordered to disengage.

b. If the answer is NO, the platoon leader reports the situation to the company team commander and continues to engage the enemy. He repositions the platoon (or squads of the platoon) when directed by the commander to—

- Continue fires into the platoon sector (engagement area).
- Occupy supplementary positions.
- Reinforce other parts of the company team.
- Counterattack locally to retake lost fighting positions.
- Withdraw from an untenable position using fire and movement to break contact.

NOTE: The platoon leader does not move his platoon out of position if it will destroy the integrity of the company team defense. All movements and actions to reposition squads and the platoon must be thoroughly rehearsed.

5-10. COUNTERATTACK

As the enemy's momentum is slowed or stopped, friendly forces may counterattack. The counterattack may be launched purely for offensive purposes to seize the initiative from the enemy. In some cases, the purpose of the counterattack will be mainly defensive, for example, to reestablish the FEBA or to restore control of the sector. The company team or platoon may participate in the counterattack as a base-of-fire element or as the counterattack force. This counterattack could be planned or conducted during the battle when opportunities to seize the initiative present themselves through situational understanding.

The platoon must secure its sector by repositioning forces, destroying remaining enemy elements, processing EPWs, and reestablishing obstacles. The company team conducts all necessary CSS functions as it prepares to continue the defense.

5-11. CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

The platoon secure its sector and reestablishes the defense by repositioning forces, destroying enemy elements, processing EPWs, and reestablishing obstacles. The platoon conducts all necessary CSS functions as it prepares to continue defending. Squad and team leaders provide ACE reports to the platoon leader. The platoon leader reestablishes the platoon chain of command. He consolidates squad ACE reports and provides the platoon report to the commander. The platoon sergeant coordinates for resupply and supervises the execution of the casualty and EPW evacuation plan. The platoon continues to improve positions. The platoon quickly reestablishes OPs and resumes security patrolling as directed.

a. Consolidation includes organizing and strengthening a position so that it can continue to be used against the enemy. Some platoon consolidation requirements are—

- Adjust other positions to maintain mutual support.
- Reoccupy and repairs positions and prepares for renewed enemy attack.
- Relocate selected weapons to alternate positions if leaders believe that the enemy may have pinpointed them during the attack.
- Repair damaged obstacles and replaces mines (Claymore) and booby traps.
- Reestablish security and communications.

b. Reorganization includes shifting internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness. Some platoon consolidation requirements are—

- Man key weapons, as necessary
- Provide first aid and prepares wounded soldiers for CASEVAC.
- Redistribute ammunition and supplies.
- Process and evacuate EPWs

Section III. BATTLEFIELD OPERATING SYSTEMS PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The BOS are a listing of critical tactical activities that provides a means of reviewing preparation and execution. Synchronization and coordination among the BOS are critical for success.

5-12. MANEUVER

Effective weapons positioning enables the platoon to mass fires at critical points on the battlefield and to enhance survivability. The platoon leader must maximize the strengths of the platoon's weapon systems while minimizing its exposure to enemy observation and fires.

a. **Depth and Dispersion**. Dispersing positions laterally and in depth helps protect the force from enemy observation and fires. Platoon positions are established in depth, allowing sufficient maneuver space within each position for in-depth placement of vehicle weapon systems and dismounted infantry elements. Vehicle and infantry fighting positions are positioned to allow massing of direct fires at critical points on the battlefield. Although the factors of METT-TC ultimately determine the placement of weapon systems and unit positions, the following also apply:

- TOW missiles are employed best at a range of 2,500 to 3,750 meters where targets can be tracked for at least 12 seconds.
- BFVs are best employed from flank positions and in positions from which they can destroy lightly armored vehicles and infantry or fix or severely limit the movement of tanks, usually at a range of 2,500 meters or less.
- Infantry rifle squads should be positioned on reverse slopes or in restricted terrain where they cannot be engaged before they take the enemy under fire.
- Infantry rifle squads can supplement the antiarmor fires of tanks and BFVs with Javelin missiles, which have a maximum range of 2,000 meters.
- Infantry rifle squads can retain or deny key terrain if employed in strong points or well-covered positions.
- Infantry rifle squads can protect obstacles or flank positions that are tied into severely restricted terrain.

b. **Flank Positions**. Flank positions enable a defending force to bring direct fires to bear on an attacking force. An effective flank position provides the defender a larger, more vulnerable target while leaving the attacker unsure of the location of the defender. Major considerations for successful employment of a flank position are the defender's ability to secure the flank and his ability to achieve surprise by remaining undetected. Effective direct fire control (Appendix G) and fratricide avoidance measures (Appendix D) are critical considerations when employing flank positions.

c. **Displacement and Disengagement Planning**. Disengagement and displacement are key control measures that allow the platoon to retain its operational flexibility and tactical agility. The ultimate goals of disengagement and displacement are to enable the platoon to maintain standoff range and to avoid being fixed or decisively engaged by the enemy.

(1) ***Considerations***. While disengagement and displacement are valuable tactical tools, they can be extremely difficult to execute in the face of a rapidly moving enemy force. In fact, displacement in contact poses great problems and the platoon leader must plan for it thoroughly before the operation. Even then, he must carefully evaluate the situation whenever displacement in contact becomes necessary to ensure that it is feasible and that it will not result in unacceptable personnel or equipment losses. The platoon leader must consider several important factors in displacement planning:

- The enemy situation (for example, an enemy attack with one motorized rifle battalion (MRB) may prevent the platoon from disengaging).
- Disengagement criteria.
- Availability of direct fire to facilitate disengagement by suppressing or disrupting the enemy.
- Availability of cover and concealment, indirect fires, and smoke to assist disengagement.
- Obstacle integration, including situational obstacles.
- Positioning of forces on terrain (such as reverse slopes or natural obstacles) that provides an advantage to the disengaging elements.
- Identification of displacement routes and times that disengagement and or displacement will take place.
- The size of the friendly force available to engage the enemy in support of the displacing unit.

- Location of remount points, the times remount operations will take place, and maneuver considerations for conduct of a remount in contact.

(2) ***Disengagement Criteria.*** Disengagement criteria dictate to subordinate elements the circumstances under which they will displace to alternate, supplementary, or subsequent defensive positions. The criteria are tied to an enemy action (such as one MRP advancing past PL DELTA) and are linked to the friendly situation (for example, they may depend on whether an overwatch element or artillery unit can engage the enemy). Disengagement criteria are developed during the planning process based on the unique conditions of a specific situation. They should not be part of the unit's SOP.

(3) ***Direct Fire Suppression.*** The attacking enemy force must not be allowed to bring effective fires to bear on a disengaging force. Direct fires from the base-of-fire element, employed to suppress or disrupt the enemy, are the most effective way to facilitate disengagement. The platoon also may receive base-of-fire support from another element in the company team, but in most cases the platoon will establish its own base of fire. Employing an internal base-of-fire requires the platoon leader to carefully sequence the displacement of his elements.

(4) ***Cover and Concealment.*** Ideally, the platoon and subordinate elements should use covered and or concealed routes when moving to alternate, supplementary, or subsequent defensive positions. Regardless of the degree of protection the route itself affords, the platoon should rehearse the movement. By rehearsing, the platoon can increase the speed at which it moves and provide an added measure of security. The platoon leader must make a concerted effort whenever time is available to rehearse movement in limited visibility and degraded conditions.

(5) ***Indirect Fires and Smoke.*** Artillery or mortar fires can be employed to assist the platoon during disengagement. Suppressive fires, placed on an enemy force as it is closing inside the defender's standoff range, will slow the enemy and cause him to button up. The defending force engages the enemy with long-range direct fires, then disengages and moves to new positions. Smoke may be employed to obscure the enemy's vision, slow his progress, or screen the defender's movement out of the defensive positions or along his displacement route.

(6) ***Obstacle Integration.*** Obstacles should be integrated with direct and indirect fires to assist disengagement. By slowing and disrupting enemy movement, obstacles provide the defender the time necessary for displacement and allow friendly forces to employ direct and indirect fires against the enemy. The modular pack mine system (MOPMS) can be employed in support of the disengagement, either to block a key displacement route once the displacing unit has passed through it or to close a lane through a tactical obstacle. The location of obstacle emplacement depends in large measure on METT-TC factors. An obstacle should be positioned far enough away from the defender that he can effectively engage enemy elements on the far side of the obstacle while remaining out of range of the enemy's massed direct fires.

5-13. FIRE SUPPORT

For the indirect fire plan to be effective in the defense, the unit must plan and execute indirect fires in a manner that achieves the intended task and purpose of each target. Indirect fires serve a variety of purposes in the defense, including—

- Slowing and disrupting enemy movement.

- Preventing the enemy from executing breaching operations at turning or blocking obstacles.
- Destroying or delaying enemy forces at obstacles using massed indirect fires or precision munitions (such as Copperhead rounds).
- Defeating attacks along dismounted avenues of approach with the use of FPF.
- Disrupting the enemy to allow friendly elements to disengage or conduct counterattacks.
- Obscuring enemy observation or screening friendly movement during disengagement and counterattacks.
- Delivering scatterable mines to close lanes and gaps in obstacles, disrupting or preventing enemy breaching operations, disrupting enemy movement at choke points, or separating or isolating enemy echelons.

5-14. MOBILITY, COUNTERMOBILITY, AND SURVIVABILITY

Mobility focuses on the ability to reposition forces, including unit displacement and the commitment of reserve forces. The company team commander's priorities may specify that some routes be improved to support such operations. Countermobility limits the maneuver of enemy forces and enhances the effectiveness of direct and indirect fires. Survivability focuses on protecting friendly forces from the effect of enemy weapon systems.

a. **Mobility**. Initially during defensive preparations, mobility focuses on the ability to resupply, reposition, and conduct rearward and forward passage of forces, supplies, and equipment. Once defensive preparations are complete, the mobility focus shifts to routes from hide positions, and to alternate, supplementary or subsequent positions. The company team commander will establish the priority of mobility effort within the company team. Normally, all or most of the engineer assets will be allocated to the survivability and or countermobility effort during the defense.

b. **Countermobility**. To be successful in the defense, the platoon leader must integrate obstacles into both the direct and indirect fire plans. (Refer to FM 90-7 for additional information on obstacle planning, siting, and turnover.) The platoon is responsible for constructing protective obstacles.

(1) ***Tactical Obstacles***. A tactical obstacle is designed or employed to disrupt, fix, turn, or block the movement of the enemy. Platoons typically construct tactical obstacles when directed by the company team commander.

(a) *Disrupting Effects.* Disrupting effects focus a combination of fires and obstacles to impede the enemy's attack in several ways to include breaking up his formations, interrupting his tempo, and causing early commitment of breaching assets. These effects are often the product of situational obstacles such as scatterable mines, and are normally used forward within engagement areas or in support of forward positions within a defensive sector. Normally, only indirect fires and long-range direct fires are planned in support of disrupting obstacles.

(b) *Fixing Effects.* Fixing effects use the combination of fires and obstacles to slow or temporarily stop an attacker within a specified area, normally an engagement area. The defending unit then can focus on defeating the enemy by using indirect fires to fix him in the engagement area while direct fires inflict maximum casualties and damage. If necessary, the defender can reposition his forces using the additional time gained as a

result of fixing the enemy. To fully achieve the fixing effect, direct and or indirect fires must be integrated with the obstacles. The company team commander must clearly specify the size of the enemy unit to be fixed.

(c) *Turning Effects.* Turning effects use the combination of direct and indirect fires, and obstacles to support the company team commander's scheme of maneuver in several ways, including the following:

- Diverting the enemy into an engagement area and exposing his flanks when he makes the turn.
- Diverting an enemy formation from one avenue of approach to another.
- Denying the enemy the ability to mass his forces on a flank of the friendly force.

(d) *Blocking Effects.* Blocking effects use the combination of direct and indirect fires, and obstacles to stop an attacker along a specific avenue of approach. Fires employed to achieve blocking effects are primarily oriented on preventing the enemy from maneuvering. Because they require the most extensive engineer effort of any type of obstacle, blocking effects are employed only at critical choke points on the battlefield. Blocking obstacles must be anchored on both sides by existing obstacles (severely restricted terrain). Direct and or indirect fires must cover the obstacles to achieve the full blocking effect. The company team commander must clearly specify the size of enemy force that he intends to block.

(2) ***Protective Obstacles***. Platoons are responsible for coordinating and employing their own protective obstacles to protect their defensive positions. To be most effective, these obstacles should be tied into existing obstacles and FPFs. The platoon may use mines and wire from its basic load or pick up additional assets (including MOPMS, if available) from the engineer Class IV or V supply point. The platoon, through the company team, may also be responsible for any other required coordination (such as that needed in a relief in place), for recovery of the obstacle, or for its destruction (as in the case of MOPMS).

(a) In planning for protective obstacles, the platoon leader must evaluate the potential threat to the platoon position, and employ the appropriate asset. For example, MOPMS is predominately an antitank system best used on mounted avenues of approach, but it does have some antipersonnel applications. Wire obstacles may be most effective when employed on dismounted avenues of approach. FM 90-7 provides detailed planning guidance for the emplacement of protective obstacles.

(b) Protective obstacles are usually located beyond hand grenade range (40 to 100 meters) from a soldier's fighting position, and may extend out 300 to 500 meters to tie into tactical obstacles and existing restricted/severely restricted terrain. The platoon leader should plan protective obstacles in depth and attempt to maximize the effective range of his weapons.

(c) When planning protective obstacles, the platoon leader should consider the amount of time required to prepare them, the resources available after constructing necessary tactical obstacles, and the priorities of work for the soldiers in the platoon.

(3) ***Wire Obstacles***. There are three types of wire obstacles (Figure 5-1): protective wire, tactical wire, and supplementary wire.

(a) Protective wire may be a complex obstacle providing all-round protection of a platoon perimeter, or it may be a simple wire obstacle on the likely dismounted avenue of

approach toward a squad position. Command-detonated M18 Claymore mines may be integrated into the protective wire or used separately.

(b) Tactical wire is positioned to increase the effectiveness of the platoon's direct fires. It is usually positioned along the friendly side of a machine gun final protective line (FPL). Tactical minefields may also be integrated into these wire obstacles or be employed separately.

(c) Supplementary wire obstacles are employed to break up the line of tactical wire to prevent the enemy from locating platoon weapons (particularly BFV, Javelin, and M240B) by following the tactical wire.

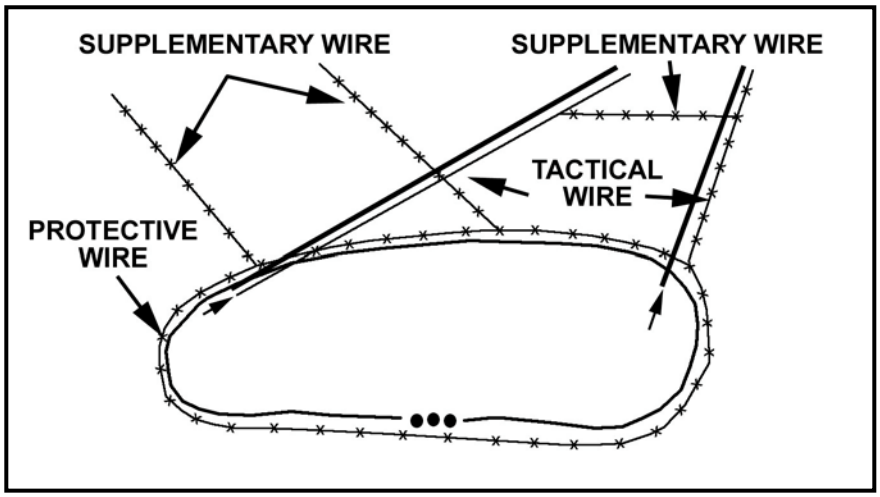

Figure 5-1. Wire obstacles.

(4) ***Obstacle Lanes***. The platoon may be responsible for actions related to lanes through obstacles. These duties may include overwatching lanes in the obstacle, marking lanes in an obstacle, reporting the locations of the entry and exit points of each lane, manning contact points, providing guides for elements passing through the obstacle, and closing lanes when directed.

c. **Survivability**. Survivability positions are prepared in defensive positions or strong points to protect vehicles, weapon systems, and the rifle squads. Positions can be dug in and reinforced with overhead cover to provide rifle squads and crew-served weapons with protection against shrapnel from air bursts. Vehicle fighting positions are constructed with both hull-defilade firing positions and turret-defilade observation positions. The company team may use blade assets to dig in ammunition prestocks at platoon alternate, supplementary, or subsequent defensive positions or in individual vehicle fighting positions. The process of digging in a task force requires many "blade hours." Assets may be limited, so the platoon leader must develop a plan for digging in the platoon. He prepares the platoon area for the arrival of the blades by marking vehicle positions and designating guides for engineer vehicles. The platoon leader must prioritize the survivability effort within the platoon. He may have time only to dig in positions that have the least amount of natural cover and concealment. Soil composition should also be a consideration in defensive positions selection; sites to be avoided include those where the soil is overly soft, hard, wet, or rocky.

5-15. AIR DEFENSE

The focus of an air defense plan is on likely air avenues of approach for enemy fixed-wing, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles, which may or may not correspond with the enemy's ground (mounted and dismounted) avenues of approach. A platoon leader will likely not emplace air defense assets; however, he must be aware that higher headquarters may employ air defense assets near his defensive position. (For a detailed discussion of air defense, see Chapter 8, Section III.)

5-16. COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

In addition to the CSS function required for all operations (refer to Chapter 9), the platoon leader should consider pre-stocking (otherwise known as pre-positioning or caches). The platoon leader's mission analysis (or guidance from the company team commander) may reveal that the platoon's ammunition needs during an operation may exceed its basic load. This requires the platoon to establish ammunition caches. The caches, which may be positioned at an alternate or subsequent position should be dug in and guarded.

Section IV. ENGAGEMENT AREA DEVELOPMENT

The engagement area (EA) is the place where the platoon leader intends to destroy an enemy force using the massed fires of all available weapons. The success of any engagement depends on how effectively the platoon leader can integrate the obstacle and indirect fire plans with his direct fire plan in the EA to achieve the platoon's purpose. At the platoon level, EA development remains a complex function that requires parallel planning and preparation if the platoon is to accomplish the tasks for which it is responsible. Despite this complexity, EA development resembles a drill. The platoon leader and his subordinate leaders use a standardized set of procedures. Beginning with an evaluation of the factors of METT-TC, the development process covers these steps:

- Identify likely enemy avenues of approach.
- Identify the enemy scheme of maneuver.
- Determine where to kill the enemy.
- Emplace weapon systems.
- Plan and integrate obstacles.
- Plan and integrate indirect fires.
- Conduct an engagement area rehearsal.

5-17. IDENTIFY LIKELY ENEMY AVENUES OF APPROACH

The platoon leader conducts an initial reconnaissance from the enemy's perspective along each avenue of approach into the sector or engagement area. During his reconnaissance, he confirms key and or decisive terrain identified by the company team commander, including locations that afford positions of advantage over the enemy as well as natural obstacles and or choke points that restrict forward movement. He also determines which avenues will afford cover and concealment for the enemy while allowing him to maintain his tempo, and he evaluates lateral mobility corridors (routes) that adjoin each avenue of approach.

5-18. IDENTIFY THE ENEMY SCHEME OF MANEUVER

The platoon leader greatly enhances this step by gaining information early. He receives answers to the following questions from the company team commander:

- Where does the enemy want to go?
- Where will the enemy go based on terrain?
- What is the enemy's mission (or anticipated mission)?
- What are the enemy's objectives?
- How will the enemy structure his attack?
- How will the enemy employ his reconnaissance assets?
- What are the enemy's expected rates of movement?
- How will the enemy respond to friendly actions?

5-19. DETERMINE WHERE TO KILL THE ENEMY

As part of his TLP, the platoon leader must determine where he will mass combat power on the enemy to accomplish his purpose. This decision is tied to his assessment of how the enemy will fight into the platoon's engagement area. Normally this entry point is marked by a prominent TRP that all vehicles in the platoon can engage with their direct fire weapons. This allows the commander to identify where it will engage enemy forces through the depth of the company team engagement area. In addition, the leader—

- Identifies TRPs that match the enemy's scheme of maneuver, allowing the platoon (or company team) to identify where it will engage the enemy through the depth of the engagement area.
- Identifies and records the exact location of each TRP.
- Determines how many weapon systems can focus fires on each TRP to achieve the desired purpose.
- Determines which section or squad can mass fires on each TRP.
- Begins development of a direct fire plan that focuses on each TRP.

NOTE: In marking TRPs, use thermal sights to ensure visibility at the appropriate range under varying conditions, including daylight and limited visibility.

5-20. EMPLACE WEAPON SYSTEMS

To position weapons effectively, leaders must know their characteristics, capabilities, and limitations of the weapons as well as the effects of terrain and the tactics used by the enemy. Platoon leaders should position weapons where they have protection, where they can avoid detection, and where they can surprise the enemy with accurate, lethal fires. In order to position the weapon, the platoon leader must know where he wants to destroy the enemy and what effect he wants the weapon to achieve (For a detailed discussion of weapons positioning refer to Section II of this chapter). Additional considerations are as follows:

- Select tentative section and squad defensive positions.
- Conduct a leader's reconnaissance of the tentative defensive positions.
- Drive the engagement area to confirm that the selected positions are tactically advantageous.

- Confirm and mark the selected defensive positions.
- Ensure the defensive positions do not conflict with those of adjacent units and is effectively tied in with adjacent positions.
- Select primary, alternate, and supplementary fighting positions to achieve the desired effect for each TRP.
- Ensure the section leaders and or squad leaders position weapon systems so the required numbers of weapons, BFVs, and or squads effectively cover each TRP.
- Ensure that positions allow BCs and or gunners to observe the engagement area from the turret-down position and engage enemy forces from the hull-down position.
- Stake vehicle positions in accordance with unit SOP so engineers can dig in the positions while BFV crews perform other tasks.
- Inspect all vehicle positions.

NOTE: When possible, select vehicle positions while moving in the engagement area. Using the enemy's perspective enables the platoon leader to assess survivability of the positions.

5-21. PLAN AND INTEGRATE OBSTACLES

To be successful in the defense, the platoon leader must integrate tactical obstacles with the direct fire plan, taking into account the intent of each obstacle. At the company team level, obstacle intent consists of the target of the obstacle, the desired effect on the target, and the relative location of the group. A platoon must have a clear task and purpose in order to properly emplace a tactical obstacle. Normally, the company team or battalion task force will designate the purpose of the tactical obstacle. The purpose will influence many aspects of the operation, from selection and design of obstacle sites to actual conduct of the defense. Once the tactical obstacle has been emplaced, the platoon leader must report its location and the gaps in the obstacle to the company team commander. This ensures that the company team commander can integrate obstacles with his direct and indirect fire plans, refining his EA development.

5-22. PLAN AND INTEGRATE INDIRECT FIRES

In planning and integrating indirect fires, the platoon leader must accomplish the following:

- Determine the purpose of fires, if the company team commander has not already done so.
- Determine where that purpose will best be achieved if the company team commander has not done so.
- Establish the observation plan with redundancy for each target. Observers will include the platoon leader as well as members of subordinate elements (such as team leaders) with fire support responsibilities.
- Establish triggers based on enemy movement rates.
- Obtain accurate target locations using survey and or navigational equipment.
- Refine target locations to ensure coverage of obstacles.

- Adjust artillery and mortar targets.
- Plan FPF.

5-23. CONDUCT AN ENGAGEMENT AREA REHEARSAL

The purpose of rehearsal is to ensure that every leader and every soldier understands the plan (Figure 5-2) and is prepared to cover their assigned areas with direct and indirect fires.

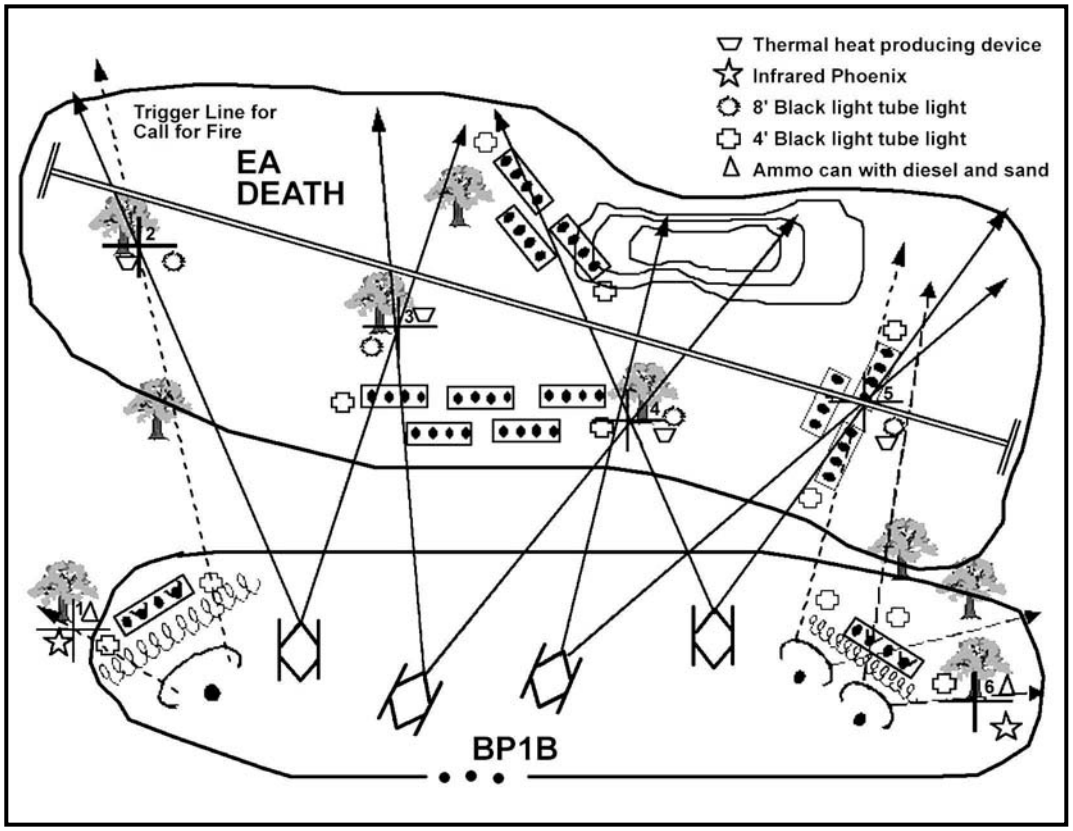

Figure 5-2. Integrated engagement area plan.

The platoon will likely participate in a company level engagement area rehearsal. The company team commander has several options for conducting a rehearsal, but the mounted rehearsal is the most common and most effective. One technique for the mounted rehearsal in the defense is to have the company team trains, under the control of the company team XO, move through the engagement area to depict the enemy force while the commander and subordinate platoons rehearse the battle from the team defensive positions. The rehearsal should cover:

- Rearward passage of security forces (as required).
- Closure of lanes (as required).
- Movement from the hide position to the defensive positions.
- Use of fire commands, triggers, and or MELs to initiate direct and indirect fires.
- Shifting of fires to refocus and redistribute fire effects.

- Disengagement criteria.
- Identification of displacement routes and times.
- Location of remount points, the times remount operations will take place, and movement considerations for conduct of a remount in contact.
- Preparation and transmission of critical reports using FM and digital systems (as applicable).
- Assessment of the effects of enemy weapon systems.
- Displacement to alternate, supplementary, or subsequent defensive positions.
- Cross-leveling or resupply of Class V items.
- Evacuation of casualties.

NOTE: When conducting his own rehearsal, the platoon leader should coordinate the platoon rehearsal with the company team to ensure other units' rehearsals are not planned for the same time and or location. Coordination will lead to more efficient use of planning and preparation time for all company team units. It also will eliminate the danger of misidentification of friendly forces in the rehearsal area.

Section V. OCCUPATION AND PREPARATION OF DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

Occupation and preparation of defensive positions is conducted concurrently with the TLP and EA development. The process is not sequential. The potential problem associated with this process is the lack of adequate preparation time if the platoon has several other defensive positions (alternate, supplementary, and subsequent) and EAs to develop.

5-24. OCCUPATION OF DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

The platoon occupies defensive positions in accordance with the platoon leader's plan and the results of the reconnaissance.

a. To ensure an effective and efficient occupation, each BFV and rifle squad moves to the location marked by the reconnaissance element as a friendly position. These positions are also on the operational graphics. Once in position, each squad leader and BC checks his location on map to ensure he is complying with the platoon leader's graphics. As the platoon occupies its positions the platoon leader ensures that each squad and vehicle locate in accordance with his plan. If the platoon leader notes discrepancies between actual positioning of the squads or vehicles and his plan, he corrects it immediately.

b. Once each BFV and rifle squad has occupied its position, the platoon leader must walk the positions to ensure the weapons orientation, positioning of the BFVs and rifle squads, and understanding of the plan are in accordance with the pre-established plan. The platoon leader should not rely on updates from his subordinates. He always should walk his defensive perimeter. Each squad leader and BC ensure he knows the location of the platoon leader and platoon sergeant for command and control purposes.

c. Own-the-night (OTN) equipment enhances the occupation process under limited visibility conditions. For instance, the platoon leader can mark his position with an infrared light source and the squad leaders and BCs can move to pre-marked positions

with infrared light sources showing them where to locate. Additionally, the squad leaders can use AN/PAQ-4B/Cs or AN/PEQ-2As to point out sectors of fire and TRPs to their soldiers, using infrared light sources to keep the occupation clandestine.

d. The platoon may conduct a hasty occupation in the defense during a counterattack or after disengagement and movement to alternate, supplementary, or subsequent defensive positions.

(1) The platoon leader issues a FRAGO covering the following minimum information:

- Changes in the enemy and or friendly situation
- The platoon task and purpose (what the platoon must accomplish and why).
- The task and purpose for each subordinate element.
- The scheme of fires.
- Coordinating instructions.

(2) At a minimum the following actions must be taken:

- The platoon approaches the defensive positions from the rear or flank.
- The platoon establishes direct fire control measures or, if these are preplanned, reviews the plan.
- The platoon leader reports "OCCUPIED" to the company team commander.

e. The platoon conducts deliberate occupation of defensive positions when time is available, when enemy contact is not expected, and when friendly elements are positioned forward in the sector to provide security for forces in the MBA. Actually establishing defensive positions is accomplished concurrently with the development of the EA. The platoon leader directs the initial reconnaissance from the EA and then tentatively emplaces vehicle and weapon system positions.

f. Once the defensive positions are established, subordinate leaders can begin to develop their sector sketches and fire plans based on the basic team fire plan developed during the leader's reconnaissance. BFV positions are improved while the direct fire plan is finalized and proofed. Depending on factors of METT-TC, the platoon may occupy hide positions when preparations are completed, then occupy the defensive positions just before initiating the defensive operation. The platoon leader, with guidance from the company team commander, designates the level of preparation for each defensive position based on the time available and other tactical considerations for the mission. The three levels of defensive position preparation are listed here in descending order of thoroughness and time required:

(1) ***Occupy***. Complete the preparation of the position from which the platoon will initially defend. The position is fully reconnoitered, prepared, and occupied prior to the "defend NLT" time specified in the company team order. The platoon must rehearse the occupation, and the platoon leader must establish a trigger for occupation of the position.

(2) ***Prepare***. The position and the corresponding EA will be fully reconnoitered. Squad and BFV positions in the defensive positions should be marked, along with direct fire control measures in the EA. Survivability positions may be dug, ammunition caches pre-positioned, and protective obstacles emplaced.

(3) ***Reconnoiter***. Both the EA and defensive positions will be fully reconnoitered. Tentative weapon positions should be planned in the defensive positions, and limited direct fire control measures should be established in the engagement area.

g. In addition to establishing the platoon's primary defensive positions, the platoon leader and subordinate leaders normally plan for preparation and occupation of alternate, supplementary, and subsequent defensive positions in accordance with the company team order.

(1) The following characteristics and considerations apply for an alternate defensive position:

- Covers the same avenue of approach and or sector of fire as the primary defensive positions; located slightly to the front, flank, or rear of the primary defensive positions.
- Positioned forward of the primary defensive positions during limited visibility operations.
- Normally employed to supplement or support positions with weapons of limited range, such as dismounted infantry positions.

(2) The following characteristics and considerations apply to a supplementary defensive position:

- Covers an avenue of approach and or sector of fire different from those covered by the primary defensive positions.
- Occupied based on specific enemy actions.

(3) The following characteristics and considerations apply for a subsequent defensive position:

- Covers the same avenue of approach and or sector of fire as the primary defensive position; located in depth through the defensive sector.
- Occupied based on specific enemy actions or conducted as part of the higher headquarters scheme of maneuver.

5-25. PRIORITY OF WORK

Leaders must ensure that soldiers prepare for the defense quickly and efficiently. Work must be done in priority to accomplish the most in the least time while maintaining security and the ability to respond to enemy action. Below are basic considerations for priorities of work.

- Emplace local security (leaders).
- Position and assign sectors of fire for each BFV (platoon leader).
- Position and assign sectors of fire for Javelin and machine gun (M240) teams (platoon leader).
- Position and assign sectors of fire for M249 gunners, grenadiers, and then riflemen (squad leaders).
- Clear fields of fire and prepare range cards.
- Prepare and sector sketches (leaders).
- Dig fighting positions (stage 1).
- Establish communications with the company team and adjacent units.
- Coordinate with adjacent units; review sector sketches.
- Emplace antitank and Claymore mines, then wire and other obstacles.
- Improve primary fighting positions and add overhead cover (stage 2).

- Prepare supplementary and then alternate positions (same procedure as the primary position).
- Distribute and stockpile ammunition, food, and water.

Unit priorities of work are normally found in SOPs; however, the commander will dictate the priorities of work for the company team based on the factors of METT-TC. Several actions may be accomplished at the same time. Leaders must constantly supervise the preparation of fighting positions, both for tactical usefulness and proper construction.

5-26. SECURITY IN THE DEFENSE

Security in the defense includes all active and passive measures taken to avoid detection by the enemy, deceive the enemy, and deny enemy reconnaissance elements accurate information on friendly positions. The two primary tools available to the platoon leader are observation posts and patrols. In planning (refer to Chapter 2, Section III) for the security in the defense, the platoon leader considers the terrain in terms of OCOKA. He uses his map to identify terrain that will protect the platoon from enemy observation and fires while providing observation and fires into the EA. Additionally, he uses intelligence updates to increase his situational understanding, reducing the possibility of the enemy striking at a time or in a place for which the platoon is unprepared.

NOTE: Updates in M2A3-equipped platoons occur when the task force transmits the enemy updates over the battalion task force ASAS-RWS or the MCS to the company team commander, and the commander forwards this enemy information to the platoons over FBCB2.

a. **Observation Posts.** An OP gives the platoon its first echelon of security in the defense. The OP provides early warning of impending enemy contact by reporting direction, distance, and size. It detects the enemy early and sends accurate reports to the platoon. The OP renders reports are by FM radio transmissions. The platoon leader establishes OPs along the most likely enemy avenues of approach into the position or into area of operation. Leaders ensure that OPs (mounted or dismounted) have communication with the platoon.

NOTE: In an M2A3-equipped platoon, mounted OPs may render reports digitally. The OP sends these reports without violating noise discipline because the information is written and the receiving station is less likely to misinterpret the report. Dismounted OPs still render reports by FM radio transmission.

(1) Early detection reduces the risk of the enemy overrunning the OP. OPs may also be equipped with a Javelin CLU to increase its ability to detect the enemy. They may receive infrared trip flares, infrared parachute flares, infrared M203 rounds, and even infrared mortar round support to illuminate the enemy. The platoon leader weighs the advantages and disadvantages of using infrared illumination when the enemy is known to have night vision devices that detect infrared light. Although infrared and thermal equipment within the platoon enables the platoon to see the OP at a greater distance, the OP should not be positioned outside the range of the platoon’s small-arms weapons.

(2) To further reduce the risk of fratricide, OPs use GPS, if available, to navigate to the exit and entry point in the platoon's position. The platoon leader ensures he submits OP locations to the company team commander to ensure a no fire area (NFA) is established around each OP positions. The commander sends his operational overlay with OP positions to the task force and to adjacent units and receives the same type overlay from adjacent units to assist in better command and control and fratricide avoidance (Appendix D). The platoon leader confirms that the company team FIST has forwarded these locations to the task force FSO and has received the appropriate NFAs on the fire support graphics.

b. **Patrols.** Platoons actively patrol in the defense. Patrols enhance the platoon's ability to fill gaps in security between OPs (refer to Chapter 7). The platoon leader forwards his tentative patrol route to the commander to ensure they do not conflict with other elements within the company team. The commander forwards the entire company team's patrol routes to the task force. This allows the task force S3 and S2 to ensure all routes are coordinated for fratricide prevention and to ensure the company team and platoons are conforming to the task force intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) plan. The patrol leader may use a GPS to enhance his basic land navigational skills as he tracks his patrol's location on a map, compass, and pace count or odometer reading.

5-27. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

Platoons establish defensive positions in accordance with the platoon leader and commander's plan. They mark EAs using marking techniques prescribed by unit SOP. The platoon physically marks obstacles, TRPs, targets, and trigger lines in the EA. During limited visibility the platoon can use infrared light sources to mark TRPs for the rifle squads. The mounted force must have heated (thermal signature) TRPs in addition to the infrared devices to orient their weapons. When possible, platoons should mark TRPs with both a thermal and infrared source so both the BFVs and rifle squads can use the TRP.

a. **Range Card**. A range card is a sketch of a sector that a direct fire weapon system is assigned to cover. A range card aids in planning and controlling fires and aids the crew in acquiring targets during limited visibility. It is also an aid for replacement personnel or platoons or squads to move into the position and to orient on their sector. During good visibility, the gunner should have no problems maintaining orientation in his sector. During poor visibility, he may not be able to detect lateral limits. If the gunner becomes disoriented and cannot find or locate reference points or sector limit markers, he can use the range card to locate the limits. The gunner should make the range card so that he becomes more familiar with the terrain in his sector. He should continually assess the sector and if necessary update his range card. (For a detailed discussion of range cards refer to Appendix H.)

NOTE: In M2A3-equipped units, individual soldiers still prepare handwritten range cards for their positions since they do not have the capability to enter this data into FBCB2.

b. **Firing Position.** After a range card has been completed, the position should be marked with ground stakes. This enables the Bradley or a replacement Bradley to reoccupy the position and be able to use the range card data.

(1) ***Stake the Position.*** Before the Bradley is moved, the position should be staked. Three stakes are required to effectively mark the position as shown in Figure 5-3.

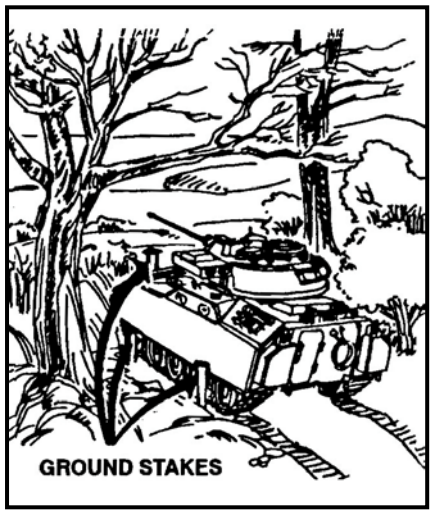

Figure 5-3. Stake the position.

(a) One stake is placed in front of the BFV, centered on the driver's station and just touching the hull. The stake should be long enough for the driver to see it when in position. The other two stakes are placed parallel to the left track and lined up with the hub on the front and rear wheels. The stakes should be placed close to the Bradley with only enough clearance to move the Bradley into position.

(b) The stakes should be driven firmly into the ground. Engineer tape or luminous tape can be placed on the friendly side of the stakes so that the driver can see them. A rock is placed at each of the front two corners of the vehicle to assist in reoccupation if the stakes are lost.

(2) ***Move into Position.*** If the situation permits, a ground guide can be used to assist the driver. If a ground guide cannot be used, the driver moves the BFV in, parallel to the side stakes, with the front stake centered on the driver's station. Once the BFV is in position, the gunner should index the range and azimuth for one of the TRPs on the range card. If the sight is aligned on the TRP, the Bradley is correctly positioned. If the sight is not aligned on the TRP, the gunner should tell the driver which way to move the vehicle to align the sight on the target. Only minor adjustments should be necessary. If the stakes are lost and the position is not otherwise marked, the vehicle is moved to the approximate location. The BC or gunner can use a compass to find the left and right limits. The vehicle should be moved if time allows until it is within 6 to 8 inches of exact position.

c. **Sector Sketches.** Detailed sketches aid in the planning, distribution, and control of the platoon fires. Gunners prepare the range cards. Squad leaders prepare squad sector sketches, section leaders prepare section sketches, and the platoon leader prepares the platoon sketch. (For a detailed discussion of sector sketches refer to Appendix H)

NOTE: In M2A3-equipped units, leaders still prepare handwritten sector sketches for their positions since they do not yet have a tool (sketch card) to enter this data into FBCB2. However, leaders may use the overlay tool to mitigate the absence of a sketch card tool.

5-28. WEAPONS PLACEMENT

To position weapons effectively, leaders must know the characteristics, capabilities and limitations of the weapons, the effects of terrain, and the tactics used by the enemy. Platoon leaders should position weapons where they have protection; avoid detection; and surprise the enemy with accurate and lethal direct fires. In order to position the weapon, the platoon leader must know where he wants to destroy the enemy and what effect he wants the weapon to achieve. Additionally, the platoon leader must consider whether his primary threat will be armored vehicles or infantry. His plan should address both mounted and dismounted threats.

a. **Individual BFVs.** Leaders should position BFVs where flank engagements will occur. This means placing fighting positions on the flank of enemy mounted avenues of approach.

(1) BFVs use defilade positions when in the defense. Defilade positions are classified as either turret-down or hull-down. A turret-down position uses terrain to mask most of the BFV, with only the ISU (or IBAS) exposed to the enemy. Because the TOW, when erected, is above the ISU, it may be fired from this position without exposing more of the BFV than necessary as long as the missile has 18 inches of clearance. The BFV cannot engage the enemy with the 25-mm from this position. A hull-down position exposes only as much of the BFV as needed to engage the enemy with the three primary weapon systems.

(2) Flank positions (Figure 5-4) in restrictive terrain provide windows of opportunity to engage the enemy and afford the BFV additional protection from enemy overwatching fire. The basis for this technique is to limit exposure only to the targets at which it is firing. It then shifts to other firing positions as enemy vehicles are destroyed. These positions restrict observation and vulnerability to only one segment of the platoon's engagement area; therefore, only those enemy vehicles that can be seen (and engaged) by the BFV can return fire.

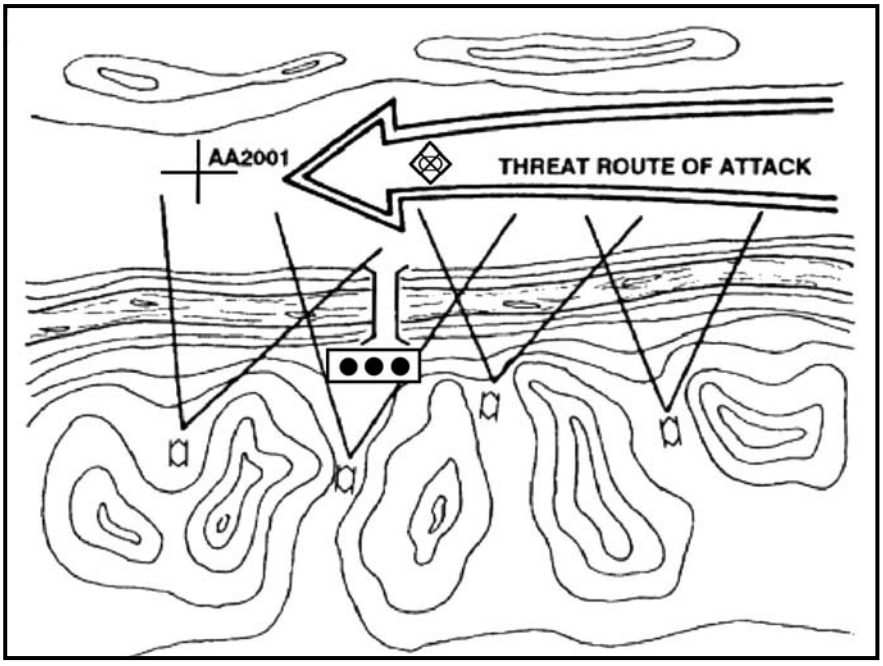

Figure 5-4. Flank positions.

(3) Leaders should consider the following when employing BFVs in the defense:

- Use a hide position when possible and stay in it until the enemy is in the area where the platoon will destroy him. A prone or dug-in observer forward gives a much smaller signature than a BFV
- Have a backdrop and avoid anything that may catch the enemy's eye.
- Position to the flank of an enemy mounted approach and behind frontal cover. It is easier for the attacker to acquire and destroy a target to his front than those to his flank or rear.
- Use covered routes into and out of firing positions.
- Use a guideline of 75 meters or more between primary and alternate BFV positions. This decreases the enemy's ability to acquire the BFV following an engagement.
- Do not construct berms. To be effective, a berm needs more than 20 feet of dirt, and this makes it easier for the attacker to spot the position. Dig one- and two-step fighting positions instead.
- Avoid positions that expose weapons to large numbers of enemy systems. It is best to hide weapons from major portions of the enemy formation. The weapon should be able to engage one or two of the enemy vehicles at the same time. It must be able to shift from its assigned sector of fire to engage other portions of the enemy formation (Figure 5-5, page 5-24).

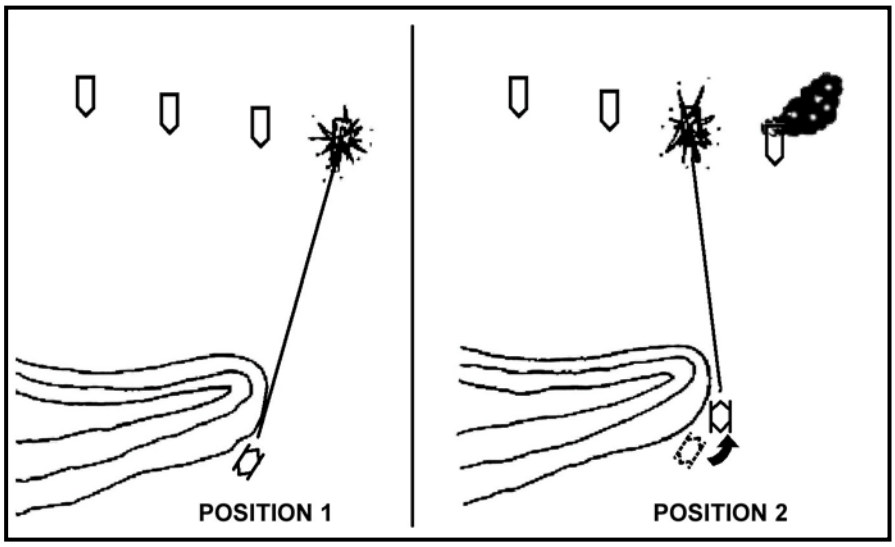

Figure 5-5. Hidden position with smaller fields of fire.

(4) Battlefield dust, smoke, fog, and darkness normally limit observation. When engagement ranges are reduced, flanking fires, use of obstacles, mutual support with the rifle squads, and covered and concealed positions increase in importance. Because of battlefield obscuration, weapons should be positioned to fight during limited visibility or be able to quickly move to alternate positions.

b. **Javelin Employment.** The Javelin's primary role is to destroy enemy armored vehicles. When there is no armored vehicle enemy, the Javelin can be employed in a secondary role of providing fire support against point targets such as bunkers and crew-served weapons positions. In addition, the Javelin's CLU can be used alone as an aided vision device for reconnaissance, security operations, and surveillance. Reduced or limited visibility will not degrade the effectiveness of the Javelin. This allows the antiarmor specialist to continue to cover his sector without having to reposition closer to the avenue of approach. The platoon leader's assessment of the factors of METT-TC will determine the employment of Javelins (For a detailed discussion on the employment of the Javelin refer to Appendix F). Based on the situation, the platoon leader may employ all or some of the Javelins. He has two options:

- *Centralized Control*. The platoon leader controls the fires of his Javelin gunners, either physically locating the weapons in his vicinity and personally directing their fires, or by grouping them together under the control of the platoon sergeant or another designated leader.
- *Decentralized Control*. Javelin gunners operate with, and are controlled by their squad leaders. The squad leader may need to employ one fire team with a Javelin. The platoon leader normally gives the command to fire.

c. **M240B and M249 Employment.** These are the platoon's primary dismounted weapons and are positioned first if the enemy is a dismounted force (For a detailed discussion on the employment of the M240B and the M249 refer to Appendix B). Once these guns are sited, the leader positions riflemen to protect them. The guns are

positioned to place direct fire on locations where the platoon leader wants to concentrate combat power to destroy the enemy.

d. **M203 Employment.** The M203 is the squad leader's indirect fire weapon. He positions it to cover dead space in the squad's sector, especially the dead space for the M240B and M249. The grenadier is also assigned a sector of fire overlapping the riflemen's sectors of fire. The high-explosive, dual-purpose (HEDP) round is effective against lightly armored vehicles such as the BMP-1 and the BTR (an eight-wheeled armored personnel carrier).

e. **Employment of Riflemen.** The platoon and squad leaders assign positions and sectors of fire to each rifleman in the platoon. Normally, they position the riflemen to support and protect the machine guns, squad automatic weapons, and antiarmor weapons. Riflemen also are positioned to cover obstacles, provide security, cover gaps between platoons and companies, or provide observation.

5-29. COORDINATION

Coordination is important in every operation. In the defense, coordination ensures that units provide mutual support and interlocking fires. In most circumstances, the platoon leader conducts face-to-face coordination to facilitate understanding and to resolve issues effectively, but when time is extremely limited, digital coordination may be the only means of sending and receiving this information. The platoon leader should send and receive the following information using his radio (or FBCB2, if equipped) prior to conducting face-to-face coordination:

- Location of leaders.
- Location of fighting positions.
- Location of OPs and withdrawal routes.
- Location and types of obstacles.
- Location, activities, and passage plan for scouts and other units forward of the platoon's position.
- Platoon's digital sector sketch.
- Location of all soldiers and or units operating in and around the platoon's area of operations.

NOTE: Current techniques for coordination hold true for units that are M2A3-equipped. If a digitized (M2A3) and a non-digitized unit are conducting adjacent unit coordination, face-to-face is the preferred method. The leader of the digitized unit has the option to enter pertinent information about the non-digitized unit into FBCB2 for later reference. The M2A3-equipped platoon leader should show the adjacent unit leader his digital sector sketch. If face-to-face coordination is not possible, leaders share pertinent information by radio.

Section VI. DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES

The company team commander's analysis will determine the most effective manner in which to defend. He will direct to the platoons what defensive techniques to employ. The platoon normally will defend using one of these basic techniques.

- Defend in sector.
- Defend a battle position.
- Defend a strong point.
- Defend a perimeter.
- Defend a reverse slope.

5-30. DEFEND IN SECTOR

Defending in sector allows a unit to maintain flank contact and security and ensures unity of effort in the scheme of maneuver. Sectors afford depth in the platoon defense. They allow the platoon to achieve the platoon leader's desired end state while facilitating clearance of fires at the appropriate level of responsibility. The company team commander normally orders a platoon to defend in sector (Figure 5-6) when flexibility is desired, when retention of specific terrain features is not necessary, or when the unit cannot concentrate fires because of any of the following factors:

- Extended frontages.
- Intervening, or cross-compartmented, terrain features.
- Multiple avenues of approach.

The platoon is assigned a defend-in-sector mission to prevent enemy forces from penetrating the rear boundary of the sector. To maintain the integrity of the sector defense, the platoon must remain tied to adjacent units on the flanks. The company team commander may direct the platoon to conduct the defense in one of two ways:

a. He may specify a series of subsequent defensive positions within the sector from which the platoon will defend to ensure that the fires of two platoons can be massed.

b. He may assign a sector to the platoon. The platoon leader assumes responsibility for most tactical decisions and controlling maneuvers of his subordinate elements by assigning them a series of subsequent defensive positions. The company team commander will normally assign a sector to a platoon only when it is fighting in isolation

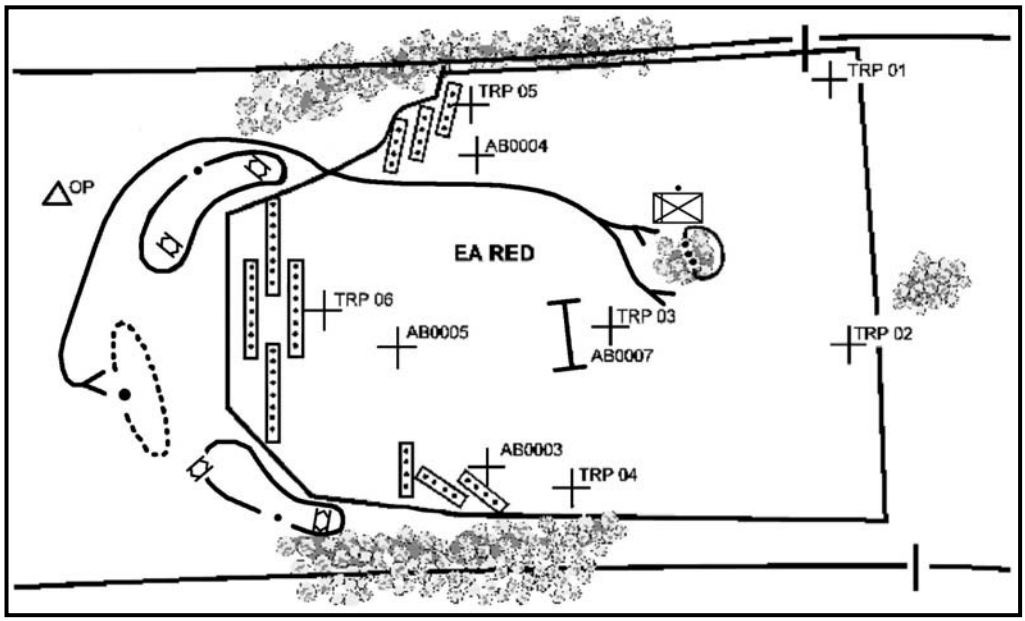

Figure 5-6. Concept of the operation for a defense in sector.

5-31. DEFEND A BATTLE POSITION

The company team commander assigns this defensive technique to his platoons when he wants to mass the fires of two or more platoons in a company team EA or to position a platoon to execute a counterattack. A unit defends from a BATTLE POSITION to:

- Destroy an enemy force in the EA.
- Block an enemy avenue of approach.
- Control key or decisive terrain.
- Fix the enemy force to allow another unit to maneuver.

The company team commander assigns platoon battle positions to allow each platoon to concentrate its fires or to place it in an advantageous position for the counterattack. The size of the platoon battle position can vary, but it should provide enough depth and maneuver space for subordinate elements to maneuver into alternate or supplementary positions and to counterattack. The battle position is a general position on the ground. The platoon leader places his BFVs on the most favorable terrain in the battle position based on the higher unit mission and commander's intent. The platoon then fights to retain the position unless ordered by the company team commander to counterattack or displace.

a. **Platoon Employment Considerations**. The following are basic methods of employing a platoon in a battle position:

- Same battle position, same avenue of approach.
- Same battle position, different avenues of approach.
- Different battle positions, same avenue of approach.
- Different battle positions, different avenues of approach.

(1) BFVs and rifle squads on the same battle position covering the same avenue of approach (Figure 5-7). The advantages of collocating the BFVs and rifle squads are:

- The platoon can defend against mounted and dismounted attacks and move rapidly to another position.

- Facilitates squads remounting of BFVs.
- Within the battle position, the BFV may be positioned with the squads forward or around the vehicles for security.
- The BFVs remain on the same battle position as the squads when the terrain provides good observation, fields of fire, and cover and concealment to both rifle squads and BFVs.
- The proximity of both the BFVs and rifle squads and their orientation on the same avenue of approach facilitates command and control.

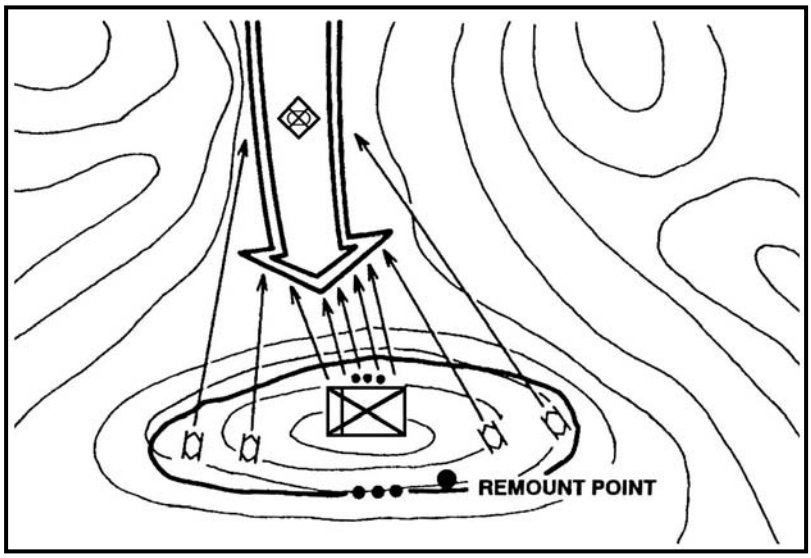

Figure 5-7. Same battle position, same avenue of approach.

(2) BFVs and rifle squads on the same battle position covering different avenues of approach (Figure 5-8).

- When the battle position has two equally dangerous avenues of approach, one with long-range and one with short-range fields of fire, the BFVs position to take advantage of their long-range fires while the rifle squads are placed for short-range fires.
- Each element is positioned on terrain best suited to its capabilities. During reduced visibility, the platoon leader may direct repositioning of some rifle squad elements to provide local security for the BFVs.
- This method requires that plans be made to shift BFVs if a dismounted avenue of approach becomes the most dangerous avenue of approach.

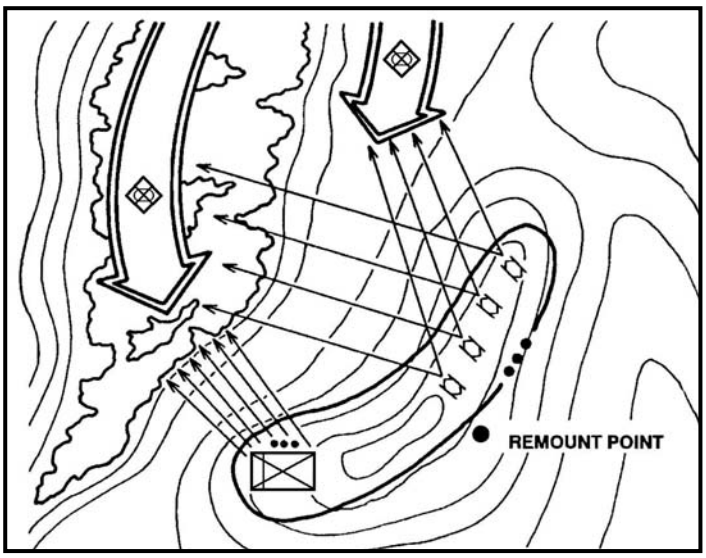

Figure 5-8. Same battle position, different avenues of approach.

(3) BFVs and rifle squads on different battle positions covering the same avenue of approach (Figure 5-9, page 5-30). If positioned on separate battle positions, BFVs and rifle squads must fight in relation to each other when covering the same avenues of approach. BFVs can provide supporting fires to the rifle squads from their primary, alternate, or supplementary positions. Both elements are positioned to engage enemy forces on the same avenue of approach, but at different ranges. There are basically three techniques to accomplish this:

- Place the rifle squads close enough to the EA to employ all their weapons. Place the BFVs in depth to enhance the antiarmor fires and to engage the enemy formation in depth. This technique enables the platoon to mass its fires on an enemy formation.
- Place the BFVs to engage the enemy in a specific EA and place the rifle squads in the most probable route the enemy infantry will use once the BFVs force the enemy to dismount their vehicles. This allows the platoon to take advantage of the BFVs' long-range firepower. The disadvantage is that rifle squads may not get into the fight and the platoon's firepower is not massed on the entire enemy formation.
- Place the rifle squads at choke points. Place the BFVs to support the infantry by destroying enemy armored vehicles as they seek to bypass the chokepoints by engaging in a supplemental EA or by firing into the same EA as the rifle squads. The BFVs can be employed forward of the rifle squads on the same avenue of approach. Then move to supplemental positions. This technique is especially useful in restrictive/severely restrictive terrain. (Figure 5-10, page 5-30.)

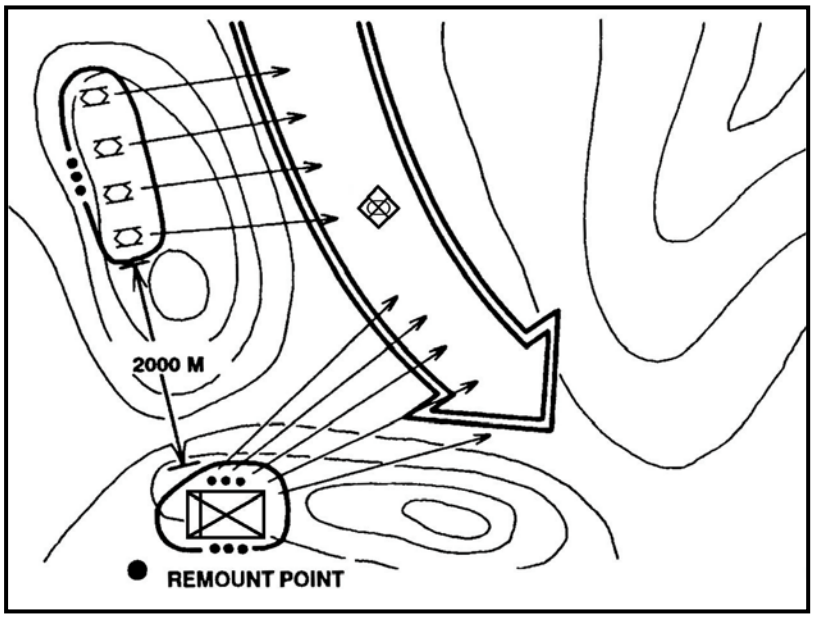

Figure 5-9. Different battle positions, same avenue of approach.

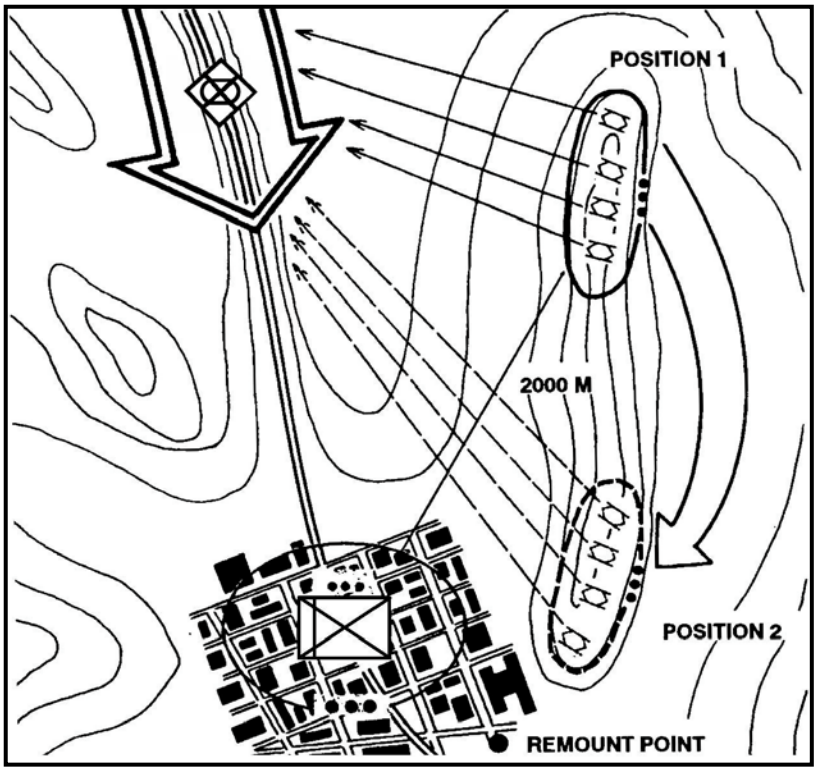

Figure 5-10. Bradleys displacing to support rifle squads.

(4) BFVs and rifle squads may be employed on different battle positions, different avenues of approach. If the platoon's BFVs and rifle squads are fighting in relationship to each other, then the platoon leader will likely locate with the rifle squads and the platoon sergeant will locate with the mounted element. When a platoon's BFVs and rifle squads will not be fighting in relation to each other, the control of both elements will likely be consolidated at company team level using the company team XO. The commander may consolidate all rifle squads in one location and deploy only the platoon's BFVs with the platoon leaders if—

- A large number of dismounted soldiers are required to hold a position, for example, key terrain.
- Primary positions for the rifle squads do not allow adequate fields of fire for BFV weapons.
- The rifle squads must occupy heavily wooded or rugged (severely restricted) terrain the BFVs cannot traverse.
- Both a mounted and dismounted avenue of approach must be defended and the terrain cannot be defended from the same battle position.

b. **Rifle Squad Considerations**. Rifle squads use available time to prepare fighting positions and obstacles. When the enemy attacks, BFVs normally engage enemy formations and, at a prearranged signal or event, move to alternate positions to the flank or to the rear of the rifle squads. The timing of this move is critical. While maximum advantage can often be gained by employing the mounted element forward, the BFVs become more vulnerable to enemy fire as the enemy closes. Rifle squads must be able to conduct operations without the support of the BFVs. The quantity and type of weapons, ammunition, mines, equipment, and supplies for the rifle squads must be considered.

c. **Mounted Element Considerations**. BFVs may be employed well forward to perform a specific task such as a screen or guard. A section with a squad can also conduct security operations. Normally, this is done under the direction and control of the company team commander.

5-32. DEFEND A STRONG POINT

Defending a strong point is not a common mission for a mechanized infantry force. Strong points sacrifice the mobility of the BFVs, require extensive engineer support (in terms of expertise, materials, and equipment), and take a long time to complete. When the platoon is directed to defend a strong point, it must retain the position until ordered to withdraw. The success of the strong-point defense depends on how well the position is tied into the existing terrain. This defense is most effective when it is employed in terrain that provides cover and concealment to both the strong point and its supporting obstacles. Mountainous, forested, or urban terrain can be adapted easily to a strong-point defense. Strong points placed in more open terrain require the use of reverse slopes or of extensive camouflage and deception efforts. This defensive mission may require the platoon to—

- Hold key or decisive terrain critical to the company team or task force scheme of maneuver.
- Provide a pivot to maneuver friendly forces.
- Block an avenue of approach.
- Canalize the enemy into one or more engagement areas.

a. The prime characteristic of an effective strong point is that it cannot be easily overrun or bypassed. It must be positioned and constructed so that the enemy knows he can reduce it only at the risk of heavy casualties and significant loss of materiel. He must be forced to employ massive artillery concentrations and dismounted infantry assaults in his attack, so the strong point must be tied in with existing obstacles and positioned to afford 360-degree security in observation and fighting positions.

NOTE: At company team level a mechanized infantry team normally executes a strong-point defense in order to take advantage of the numerous infantry squads and their ability to retain ground. The defensive can be used in conjunction with other techniques to make best use of the team's tanks and BFVs.

b. A variety of techniques and considerations are involved in establishing and executing the strong point defense including considerations for displacement and withdrawal from the strong point.

(1) The platoon leader begins by determining the projected size of the strong point, and by assessing the number of vehicles, weapon systems, and individual soldiers available to conduct the assigned mission as well as the terrain on which the platoon will fight. He must remember that although a strong point is usually tied into a company team defense and flanked by other defensive positions, it must afford 360-degree observation and firing capability.

(2) The platoon leader must ensure that the layout and organization of the strong point maximizes the capabilities of the platoon's personnel strength and weapon systems without sacrificing the security of the position. Siting options range from positioning all the vehicles outside the strong point (with the rifle squads occupying fighting positions inside it) to placing all assets within the position. From the standpoint of planning and terrain management, placing everything in the strong point is the most difficult option and potentially the most dangerous because of the danger of enemy encirclement (Figure 5-11).

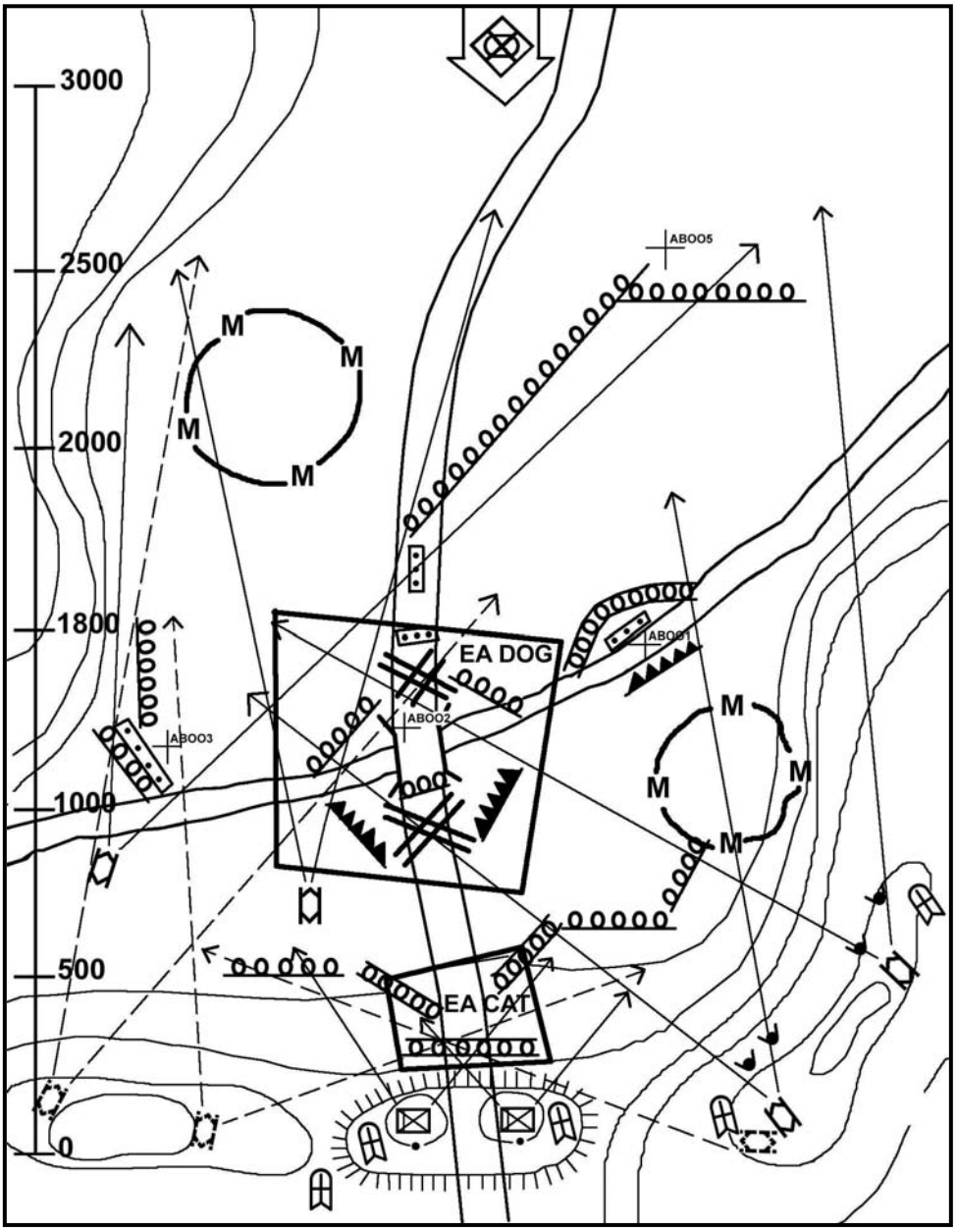

Figure 5-11. Defending a strong point (BFVs outside a strong point, rifle squad in reserve slope).

(3) In laying out the strong point, the platoon leader designates weapon positions that support the company team defensive plan. Once these primary positions have been identified, he continues around the strong point, siting weapons on other possible enemy avenues of approach and EAs until he has the ability to orient effectively in any direction. The fighting positions facing the company team EA may be along one line of defense or staggered in depth along multiple lines of defense (if the terrain supports positions in depth). Vehicle positions may be located abreast of the two-man fighting positions or, for greater depth, behind them. The platoon leader can create a broader strong point frontage by interspersing vehicle and rifle squad positions.

(4) The platoon's reserve may be comprised of mounted sections, fire teams, or a combination of the two. The platoon leader must know how to influence the strong point battle by employing his reserve. He has several employment options including reinforcing a portion of the defensive line or counterattacking along a portion of the perimeter against an identified enemy main effort.

(5) The platoon leader should identify routes or axes that will allow the reserve to move to any area of the strong point. He should then designate positions the reserve can occupy once they arrive. These routes and positions should afford sufficient cover to allow the reserve to reach its destination without enemy interdiction. The platoon leader should give special consideration to developing a direct fire plan for each contingency involving the reserve. The key area of focus may be a plan for isolating an enemy penetration of the perimeter. Rehearsals cover actions the platoon takes if it has to fall back to a second defensive perimeter and include the direct fire control measures necessary to accomplish the maneuver. FPF may be employed to assist in the displacement.

c. Engineers support strong point defense by reinforcing the existing obstacles. Priorities of work will vary depending on the factors of METT-TC, especially the enemy situation and time available. For example, the first 12 hours of the strong point construction effort may be critical for emplacing countermobility and survivability positions as well as command and control bunkers. On the other hand, if the focus of engineer support is to make the terrain approaching the strong point impassable, the task force engineer effort must be adjusted accordingly.

(1) The task force obstacle plan provides the foundation for the company team strong point obstacle plan. The commander or platoon leader determines how he can integrate protective obstacles (designed to defeat dismounted infantry assaults) into the overall countermobility plan. If adequate time and resources are available, he should plan to reinforce existing obstacles using field expedient demolitions.

(2) Once the enemy has identified the strong point, he will mass all the fires he can spare against the position. To safeguard his rifle squads, the platoon leader must arrange for construction of overhead cover for individual fighting positions. If the strong point is in a more open position, such as on a reverse slope, he may also plan for interconnecting trench lines that will allow soldiers to move between positions without exposure to direct and indirect fires. Time permitting, these crawl trenches can be improved to fighting trenches or standard trenches.

5-33. DEFEND A PERIMETER

A perimeter defense allows the defending force to orient in all directions. In terms of weapons emplacement, direct and indirect fire integration, and reserve employment, a platoon leader conducting a perimeter defense should consider the same factors as a strong point operation.

a. The perimeter defense is a relatively uncommon mission for a mechanized platoon because it allows only limited maneuver and limited depth. Nonetheless, the platoon may be called on to execute a perimeter defense under a variety of conditions to include—

- Holding critical terrain in areas where the defense is not tied in with adjacent units.

- Defending in place when it has been bypassed and isolated by the enemy.
- Conducting occupation of an independent assembly area or reserve position.
- Preparing a strong point.
- Concentrating fires in two or more adjacent avenues of approach.
- Defending CS or CSS assets.
- Occupying a patrol base when dismounted.

NOTE: The perimeter defense is normally conducted at task force or higher level to protect maneuver units against Level III enemy and to protect CS and CSS assets against Level I and II enemy.

b. The major advantage of the perimeter defense (Figure 5-12) is the platoon's ability to defend against an enemy avenue of approach. A perimeter defense differs from other defenses in that—

- The trace of the platoon is circular or triangular rather than linear.
- Unoccupied areas between squads and vehicles are smaller.
- Flanks of squads and sections are bent back to conform to the plan.
- The bulk of combat power is on the perimeter.
- The reserve is centrally located.

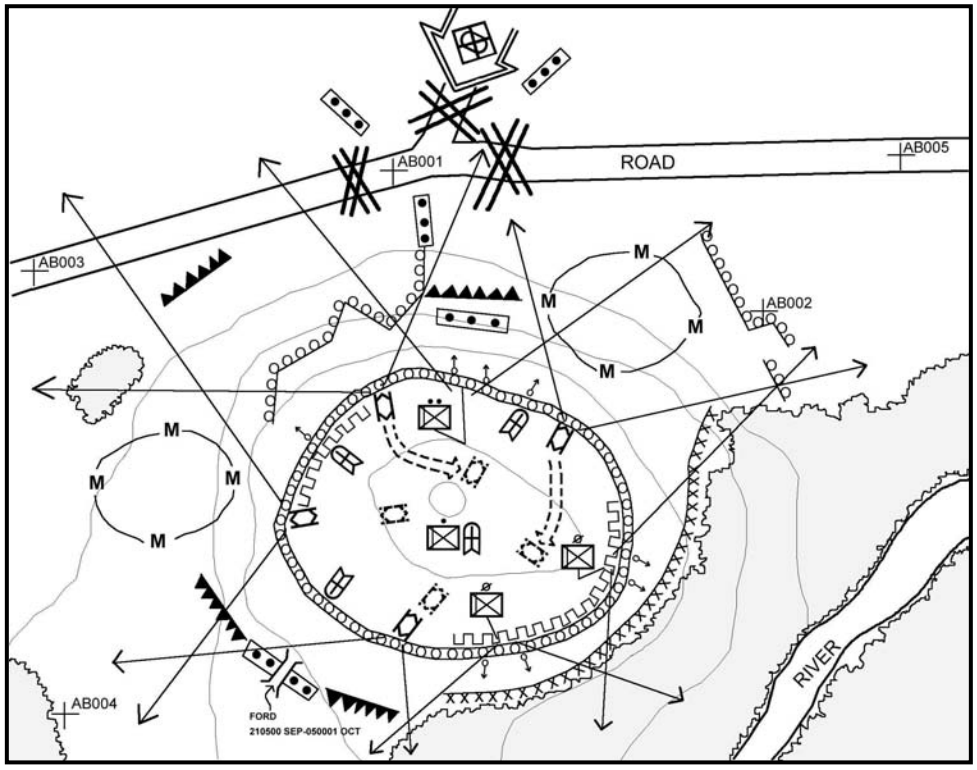

Figure 5-12. Perimeter defense with rifle squad in reserve.

NOTE: A variant of the perimeter defense is the use of the shaped defense, which allows two of the team's platoons to orient at any particular time on any of three engagement areas.

5-34. DEFEND ON A REVERSE SLOPE

The platoon leader's analysis of the factors of METT-TC often leads him to employ his forces, especially rifle squads, on the reverse slope (Figure 5-13). If the rifle squads are on a mounted avenue of approach, they must be concealed from enemy direct-fire systems. This means rifle squads should be protected from enemy tanks and observed artillery fire. This applies even when rifle squads are fighting with their BFVs.

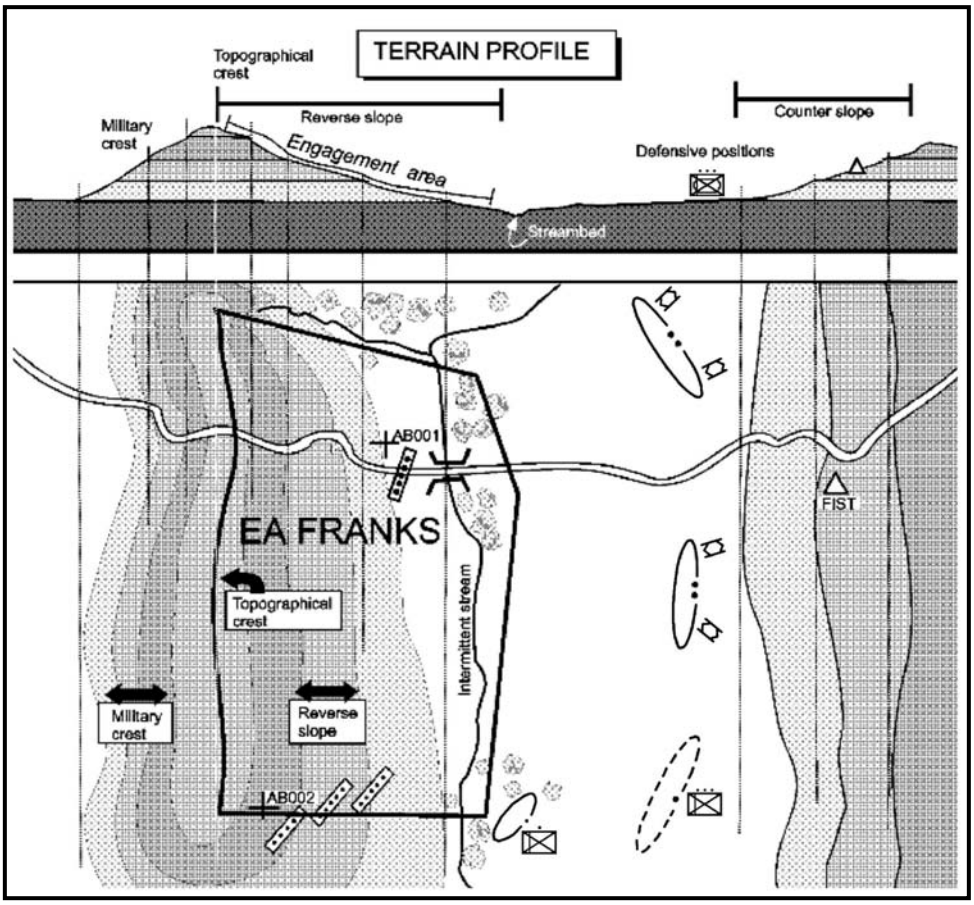

Figure 5-13. Reverse-slope defense options.

a. The majority of a rifle squad's weapons are not effective beyond 600 meters. To reduce or preclude destruction from enemy direct and indirect fires beyond that range, a reverse-slope defense should be considered. This conflicts to some extent with the need for maximum observation forward to adjust fire on the enemy and the need for long-range fields of fire for friendly BFVs and tanks. In some cases it may be necessary for these vehicles to be deployed forward while the rifle squads remains on the reverse slope. The vehicles withdraw from their forward positions as the battle closes. Their new

positions should be selected to take advantage of the BFV's long-range fires to get enfilade shots from the depth and the flanks of the reverse slope.

b. The nature of the enemy may change at night, and the rifle squads may occupy the forward slope or crest to deny it to the enemy. In those circumstances, it is feasible for a rifle squad to have an alternate night position forward. The area forward of the topographical crest must be controlled by friendly forces through aggressive patrolling and both active and passive reconnaissance measures. The platoon should use all of its night vision devices to deny the enemy undetected entry into the platoon's defensive area. The BFV is a key part of the platoon's surveillance plan and should be positioned to take advantage of its thermal sights (ISU or IBAS). The enemy must not be allowed to take advantage of reduced visibility to advance to a position of advantage without being taken under fire.

c. The company team commander normally makes the decision to position platoons on a reverse slope. He positions platoons on a reverse slope when—

- He wishes to surprise or deceive the enemy about the location of his defensive position.
- A forward slope might be made untenable by direct enemy fire.
- Occupation of the forward slope is not essential to achieve depth and mutual support.
- Fields of fire on the reverse slope are better or at least sufficient to accomplish the mission.
- Forward slope positions are likely to be the target of concentrated enemy artillery fires.

d. The following are advantages of a reverse-slope defense:

- Enemy observation of the position, including the use of surveillance devices and radar, is masked.
- Enemy cannot engage the position with direct fire without coming within range of the defender's weapons.
- Enemy indirect fire will be less effective because of the lack of observation.
- Enemy may be deceived about the strength and location of positions.
- Defenders have more freedom of movement out of sight of the enemy.

e. Disadvantages of a reverse-slope defense include the following:

- Observation to the front is limited.
- Fields of fire to the front are reduced.
- Enemy can begin his attack from a closer range.

f. BFVs offer the platoon additional opportunities with regard to positioning. They can begin positioned forward to take advantage of their protection from artillery and their ability to engage the enemy at long ranges. After an initial engagement, BFVs may move over or around the crest line and through the rifle squads on the reverse slope to a position either on the flanks or farther in depth to the rear.

g. Obstacles are necessary in a reverse-slope defense. Since the enemy will be engaged at close range, obstacles should prevent the enemy from closing too quickly and overrunning the positions, and they should facilitate the platoon's disengagement.

Section VII. RETROGRADE OPERATIONS

The retrograde is a type of defensive operation that involves organized movement away from the enemy. The enemy may force these operations, or a commander may decide to execute them voluntarily. The platoon will execute retrograde operations as a part of a larger force. The three forms of retrograde operations are withdrawal, delay, and retirement.

5-35. WITHDRAWAL

A withdrawal is a planned operation that occurs when an element disengages from enemy contact to reposition itself for another mission. A platoon usually conducts a withdrawal as part of a larger force. As part of a company, a platoon may fall back with the main element (under pressure) or may be used as the detachment left in contact (DLIC) in a withdrawal not under pressure. The following information applies whether or not the platoon is under pressure from the enemy. Regardless of employment, the platoon leader conducts his withdrawal IAW his higher commander's guidance. On receipt of the order to conduct a withdrawal, the platoon leader begins preparing his order based on his higher unit's FRAGO. He identifies possible key terrain and routes based on the higher unit's graphics and his map. He formulates and briefs his FRAGO to his squad leaders and BCs. When the withdrawal is executed, squad leaders and BCs ensure they are moving IAW the platoon leader's plan. If the operation occurs during limited visibility, infrared and thermal equipment enhances command and control and navigation during movement as explained in linkup operations.

a. **Withdrawal Not Under Pressure.** In this type of withdrawal, platoons normally serve as the DLIC or as part of the DLIC (Figure 5-14). A DLIC is used to deceive the enemy into thinking that the entire force is still in position. As the DLIC, the platoon—

- Repositions BFV sections, squads, and weapons to cover the company's withdrawal (Figure 5-15).
- Repositions a squad and a BFV in each of the other platoon positions to cover the most dangerous avenue of approach into the position.
- Continues the normal operating patterns of the company and simulates company radio traffic.
- Covers the company withdrawal with planned direct BFV fire, dismounted infantry fire, and indirect fire if the company is attacked during withdrawal.
- Withdraws by echelon once the company is at its next position. The BFV is specially suited for this purpose because of its protection, mobility, and organic weapons systems.

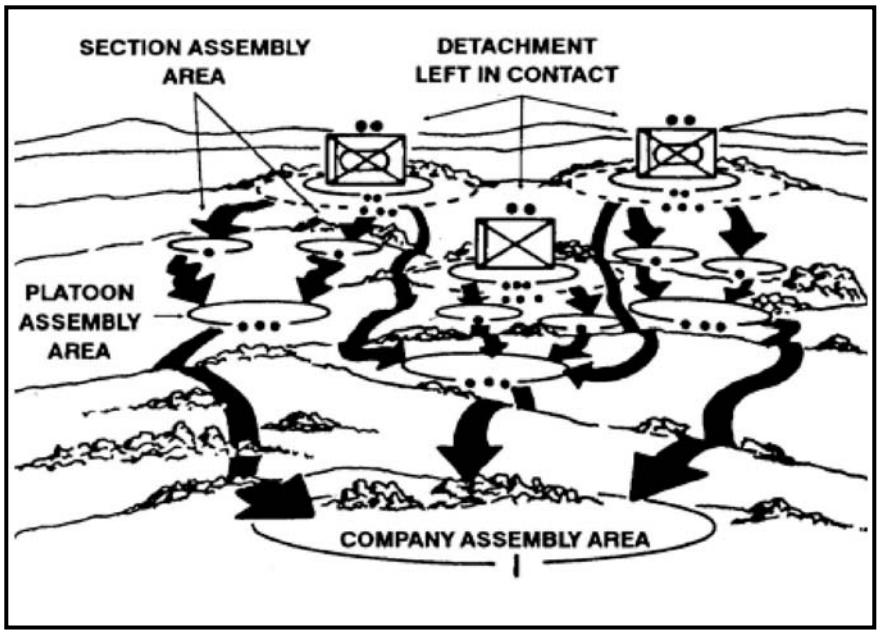

Figure 5-14. Withdrawal not under pressure.

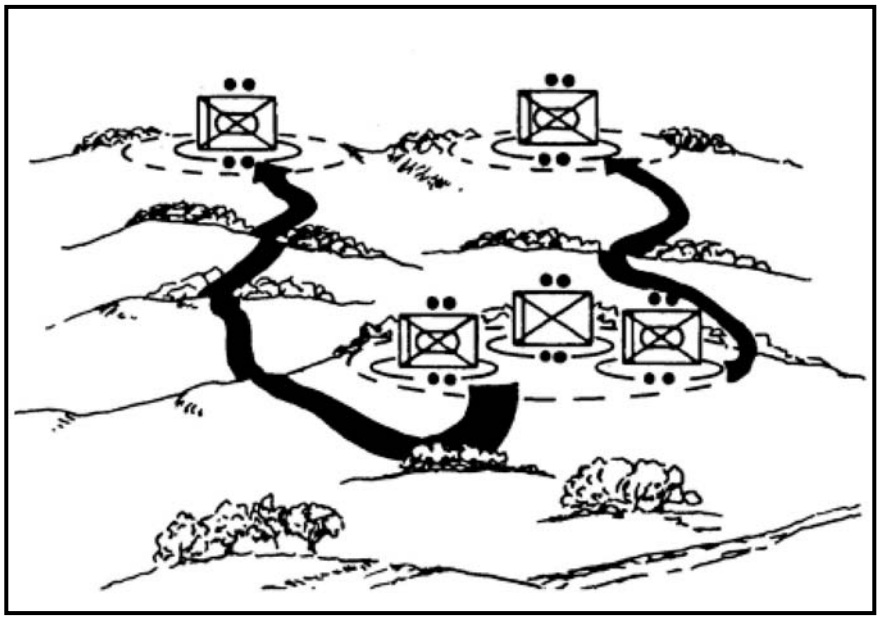

Figure 5-15. Repositioning of squads and section.

b. **Withdrawal Under Pressure**. If the platoon cannot prepare and position the security force, it conducts a fighting withdrawal. The platoon disengages from the enemy by maneuvering to the rear (Figure 5-16, page 5-40). Soldiers, squads, or BFV sections not in contact are withdrawn first to provide suppressive fires and allow the soldier, squad, or BFV sections in contact to withdraw.

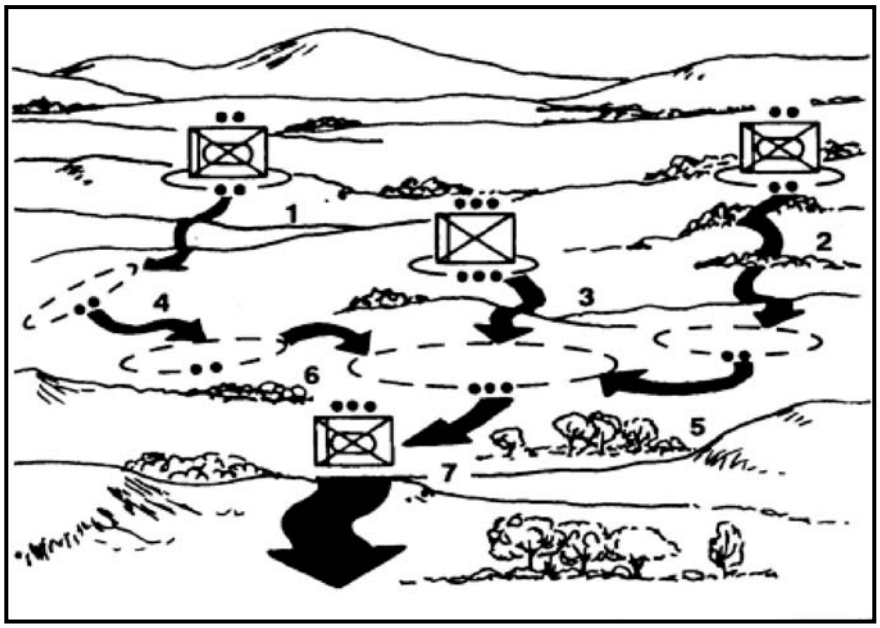

Figure. 5-16. Bounding overwatch to the rear.

c. **Disengagement.** Based on orders from the task force commander, the commander decides how long to retain defensive positions. The company or company team may be required to remain and fight as long as possible, or it may be required to disengage and displace to subsequent positions. As part of a company or company team, a platoon may disengage to defend from another battle position, to prepare for a counterattack, to delay, to withdraw, or to prepare for another mission.

(1) Fire and movement to the rear is the basic tactic for disengaging. All available fires are used to slow the enemy and allow platoons to move away. The commander may move his platoons and mass fires to stop or slow the enemy advance before beginning the movement away from the enemy.

(a) A base of fire is formed to cover platoons, sections or squads moving away from the enemy. One platoon, section or squad acts as the base of fire, delaying the enemy with fire or retaining terrain blocking his advance, while other units break contact (Figure 5-17).

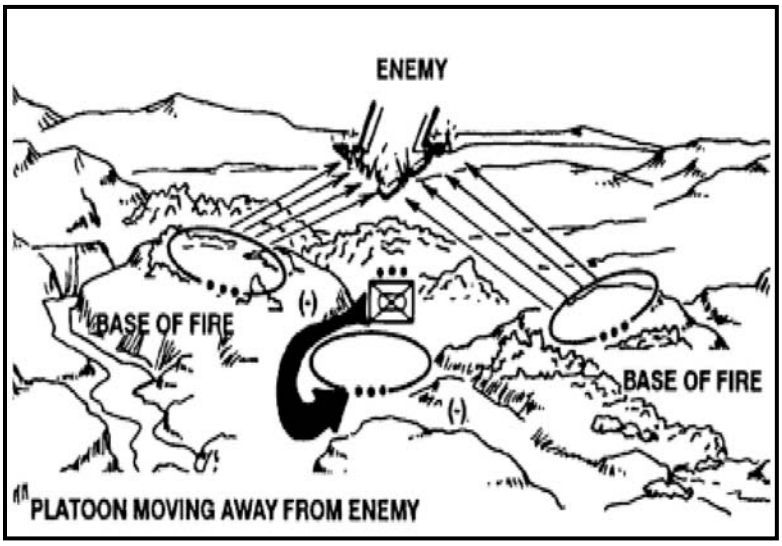

Figure 5-17. Breaking contact.

(b) Moving platoons, sections or squads arrive at their next position and provide a base of fire to cover the rearward movement of forward units (Figure 5-18).

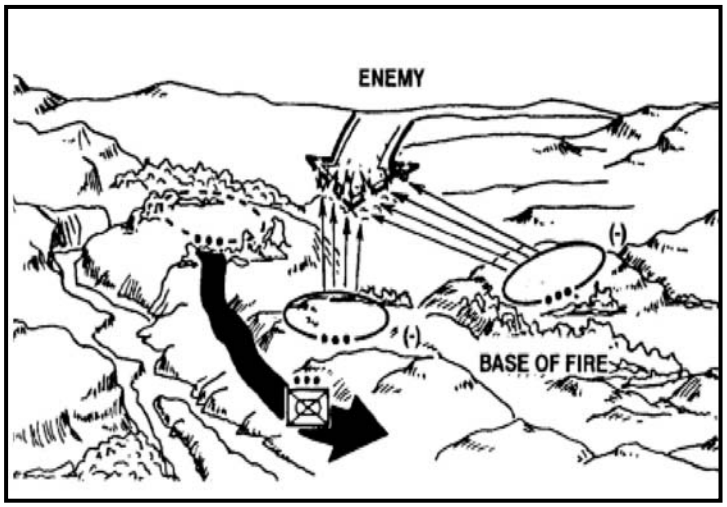

Figure 5-18. Rearward movement.

(c) Fire and movement is repeated until contact with the enemy is broken, the platoon passes through a higher unit base-of-fire force, or the platoon is in position to resume its defense.

(d) Tactics used by the platoon to disengage from the enemy differ according to how the platoon is deployed, the commander's plan for disengagement, and other factors of METT-TC. The following actions apply in all cases.

- Maximum use is made of the BFV's firepower to cover rearward movement.
- BFVs back out of position to cover or concealment, and move, keeping one terrain feature between the vehicle and the enemy.
- Turret weapons remain pointed in the direction of the enemy.

- Rapid movement and an effective base of fire enhance the mobility advantage and are key to successful disengagements.

(2) Plans for disengagement may be part of any defensive plan. When squads are deployed, a plan for rapid remounting must be made.

(a) When the platoon employs the BFV and rifle squads on separate positions, platoon remount points and routes to the remount points must be chosen. In addition, routes must be rehearsed and timed. The platoon remount point can be near the rifle squad's position, near the BFV position, or between the two (Figure 5-19).

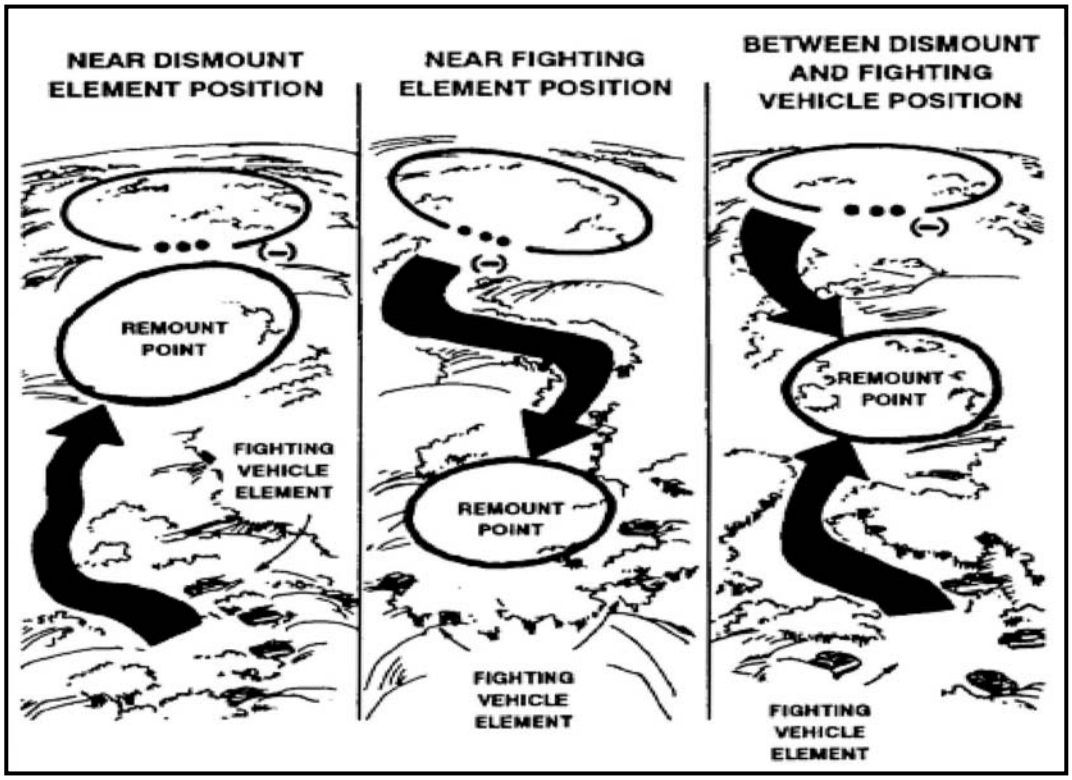

Figure 5-19. Platoon remount points.

(b) Covered positions for vehicles and rifle squads should be chosen to allow for easy remounting even during limited visibility in the remount point. Squad leaders must ensure their men know where the remount point is, where the vehicle is, and routes to the point. Routes to the remount point should be covered and should allow speedy movement for both elements. Planning considerations include the following:

- BFVs move faster (mobility), have better firepower, and have more protection from small-arms fire and artillery fragments than dismounted soldiers.
- BFVs often shift from one firing position to another, so routes must be planned from each position to the remount point.

(3) When the dismounted and fighting vehicle elements are separated, there are three ways the dismounted element can disengage. Simultaneous disengagement (moving all teams at the same time) can be used if the element is covered by another force. When the

dismounted element must cover its own movement, it disengages by fire teams or by thinning the lines.

(a) When the squads simultaneously disengage, they assemble and move as one element to the remount point using appropriate movement techniques. Simultaneous disengagement is favored when rapid movement is critical, when the disengaging element has adequate overwatching fires, when the enemy has not closed on the rifle squad or cannot fire effectively at it, or when there are obstacles to delay the enemy.

(b) When the rifle squads must cover their own movement, two squads stay in position as a base of fire. The third squad moves to the rear. The squads left in position must fire into the entire element‘s sector to cover the movement of the other squad. Sectors of fire are adjusted for better coverage. The moving squad may displace by fire teams (Figure 5-20). The squad left in position sequentially disengages. Two squads provide a base of fire while one squad disengages. Movement to the rear by alternating squads continues until contact is broken. Once contact is broken disengagement is complete, and the rifle squads move to the remount point using appropriate movement techniques.

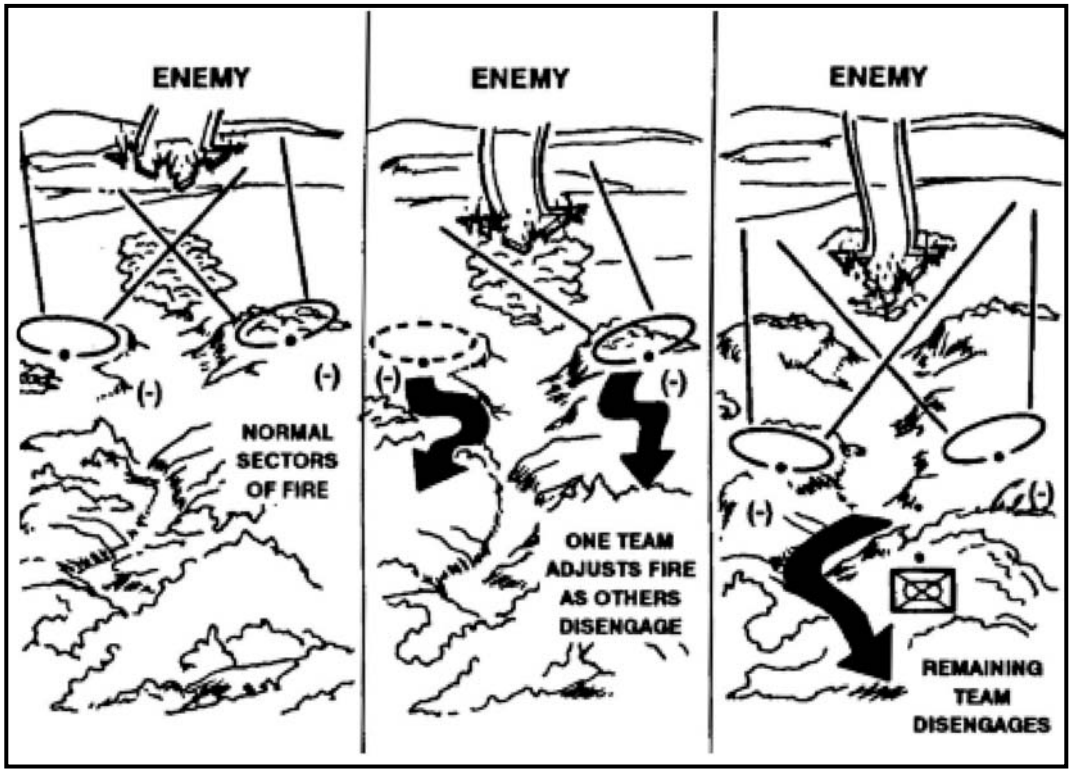

Figure 5-20. Disengagement by fire teams.

(c) When disengaging by thinning the lines, selected soldiers from each fire team (often one soldier from each fighting position) disengage and move to the rear. The soldiers still in position become the base of fire to cover the movement (Figure 5-21, page 5-44).

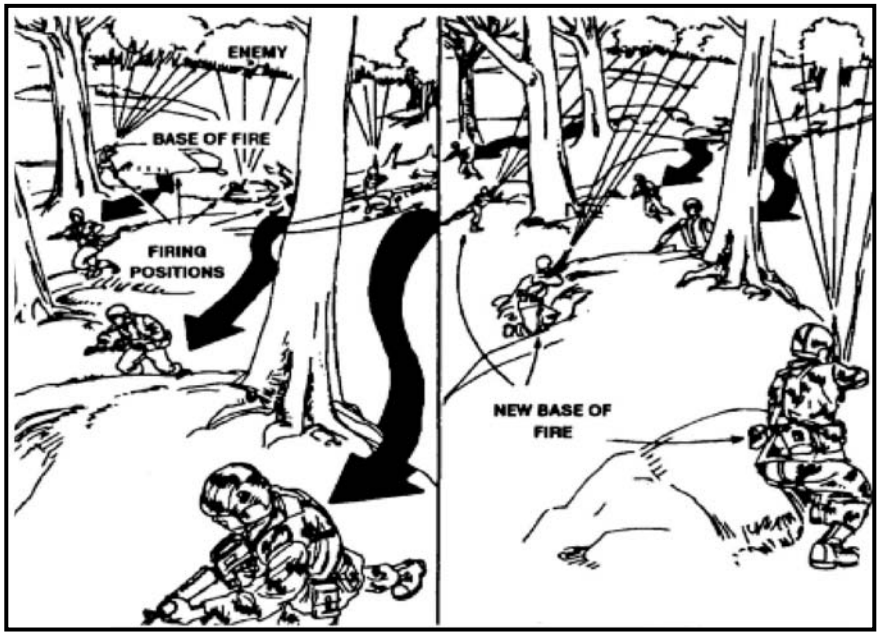

Figure 5-21. Disengagement by thinning the lines.

(d) When BFVs and rifle squads are employed on the same position, the squads normally move to the remount point while the BFVs provide a base of fire. The BFVs then quickly move to the remount point, link up with the rifle squads, load them, and move out. Squads use the disengagement techniques discussed previously. The method selected is dictated by the enemy situation, terrain, fighting vehicle crews' ability to serve as a base of fire, and type and amount of overwatching fires.

(4) ***Fighting Vehicle Element Disengagement***. Because of the BFV's mobility, firepower, and protection against small-arms fire and artillery shell fragments, it is usually best for the dismounted element (when deployed) to disengage while covered by the BFVs. If the BFVs are not in a position to support the dismount element by fire, or if the dismount element is heavily engaged, the fighting vehicle element may disengage first and move to a position to assist the dismounted element in disengagement. Whichever method is used, there are two basic ways the vehicle element can disengage. If BFVs are covered by another force, simultaneous disengagement may be used. If BFVs must cover their own movement, they disengage by section. These methods are similar to those used by the dismount element.

(a) *Simultaneous Disengagement*. When BFVs disengage simultaneously, they move as a platoon as quickly as possible. This method normally is used when BFVs are covered by another force and speed is the most critical factor. If fire teams are already mounted, the entire platoon moves, using movement techniques, to a position designated by the commander. If fire teams are deployed, BFVs move to the remount point to pick them up, or they may attack the enemy by fire from a new position to allow the fire teams to disengage (Figure 5-22).

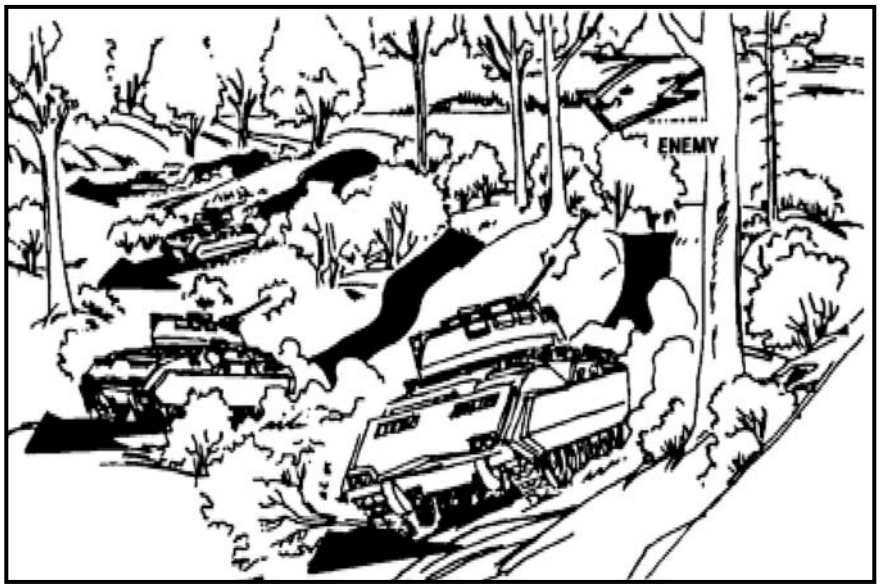

Figure 5-22. Simultaneous disengagement.

(b) *Disengagement by Vehicle or Section.* When BFVs in the platoon must cover their own disengagement, one, two, or three vehicles can be left in position as a base of fire while the remaining elements move to the rear. BFVs left in position must cover the entire sector until the moving vehicles reach positions that they can use to provide a base of fire (Figure 5-23).

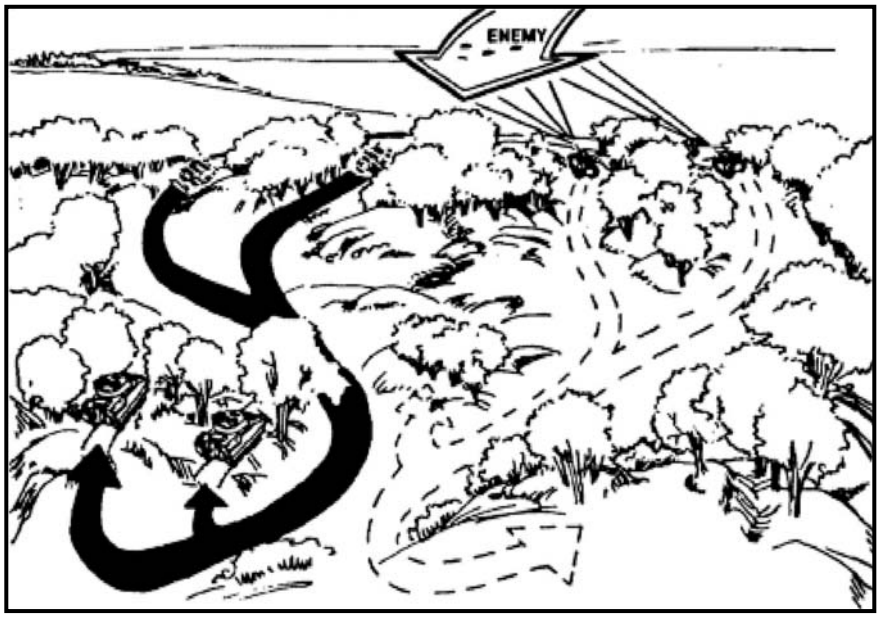

Figure 5-23. Disengagement by sections.

5-36. DELAY

A delay is a form of retrograde in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without becoming decisively engaged. The commander will direct the method of delay to the platoons. In either method of a delay, the rifle platoon forces the enemy to slow its movement by forcing him to repeatedly deploy for the attack. Before the enemy assault, the delaying force withdraws to new positions. The squads or sections and platoons disengage from the enemy as described in a withdrawal under pressure (see paragraph 5-35). Once disengaged, a platoon moves directly to its next position and defends again. The squads and platoons slow the advance of the enemy by shaking his morale, causing casualties and equipment losses. To accomplish a delay, the platoon can employ—

- Ambushes.
- Snipers.
- Obstacles.
- Minefields (to include phony minefields).
- Artillery and mortar fire.

a. **Delay from Alternate Positions**. This method of delay is employed when the area of operations is narrow and the commander has adequate forces to split between different positions. For example, as the first and second platoons engage the enemy, third platoon occupies the next position in depth and prepares to assume responsibility for the fight. First and second platoon disengage from the enemy, pass through/around the third platoon, and move to the next position. The advantage of this method is that it allows positioning in depth, allows for more time equipment and soldier maintenance, and increases flexibility. The disadvantages are that it requires continuous coordination, requires a passage of lines, and engages only a portion of the enemy at one time.

b. **Delay from Subsequent Positions**. This method of delay is employed when the area of operations is wide and the forces available to the commander do not allow themselves to be split. All delaying subordinate units are committed to each of the series of battle positions along the same phase line. The commander will stagger the movement of delaying elements so that not all of them are moving at the same time. The advantage of this method is that the commander is able to mass the effects of all available combat power. The disadvantages are that there is limited depth to the delay positions, less available time to prepare subsequent positions, and less flexibility.

5-37. RETIREMENT

A retirement is a form of retrograde in which a force out of physical contact with the enemy moves away from the enemy. Units conduct retirements as tactical road marches where security and speed are the most important considerations. The retiring unit generally moves to an assembly area in preparation for a future mission. The rifle platoon will participate in a retirement as part of a larger force.

Section VIII. FIGHTING AND SURVIVABILITY POSITIONS

The defensive plan will normally require building fighting positions. Fighting positions protect soldiers by providing cover from direct and indirect fires, and by providing concealment through positioning and proper camouflage.

5-38. PRINCIPLES

Following three basic principles will allow leaders to effectively and efficiently prepare fighting position. These principles are:

- Site positions to best engage the enemy.
- Prepare positions by stages.
- Leaders inspect all positions.

a. **Site Positions to Best Engage the Enemy**. The most important aspect of a fighting position is that it must be tactically well-positioned. Leaders must be able to look at the terrain and quickly identify the best location for fighting positions.

- Soldiers must be able to engage the intended enemy element within their assigned sectors of fire.
- Soldiers should be able to fire out to the maximum effective range of their weapons with maximum grazing fire and minimal dead space.
- Grenadiers should be placed in positions to cover dead space.
- Leaders must ensure fighting positions provide mutually supporting, interlocking fires. This allows them to cover the platoon's sector from multiple positions.
- When possible, site positions behind natural cover, and in easily camouflaged locations. The enemy must not be able to identify the position until it is too late and he has been effectively engaged.

b. **Prepare Positions by Stages.** Leaders must ensure their soldiers understand when and how to prepare fighting positions based on the situation. Soldiers prepare hasty fighting positions every time the platoon makes an extended halt. Half of the platoon digs in while the other half maintains security. Soldiers prepare positions in stages and a leader inspects the position at each stage before soldiers move to the next stage. (See the following example.)

STAGE 1: The platoon leader checks fields of fire from the prone position. For a stage 1 position (Figure 5-24, page 5-48), the soldiers—

- Emplace sector stakes.
- Stake the primary sector.
- Position grazing fire log or sandbag between the sector stakes.
- Place the aiming stake(s), if required, to allow limited visibility engagement of a specific target.
- Scoop out elbow holes.
- Trace the outline of the position on the ground.
- Clear the fields of fire for both the primary and secondary sectors of fire.
- The leader inspects the position.

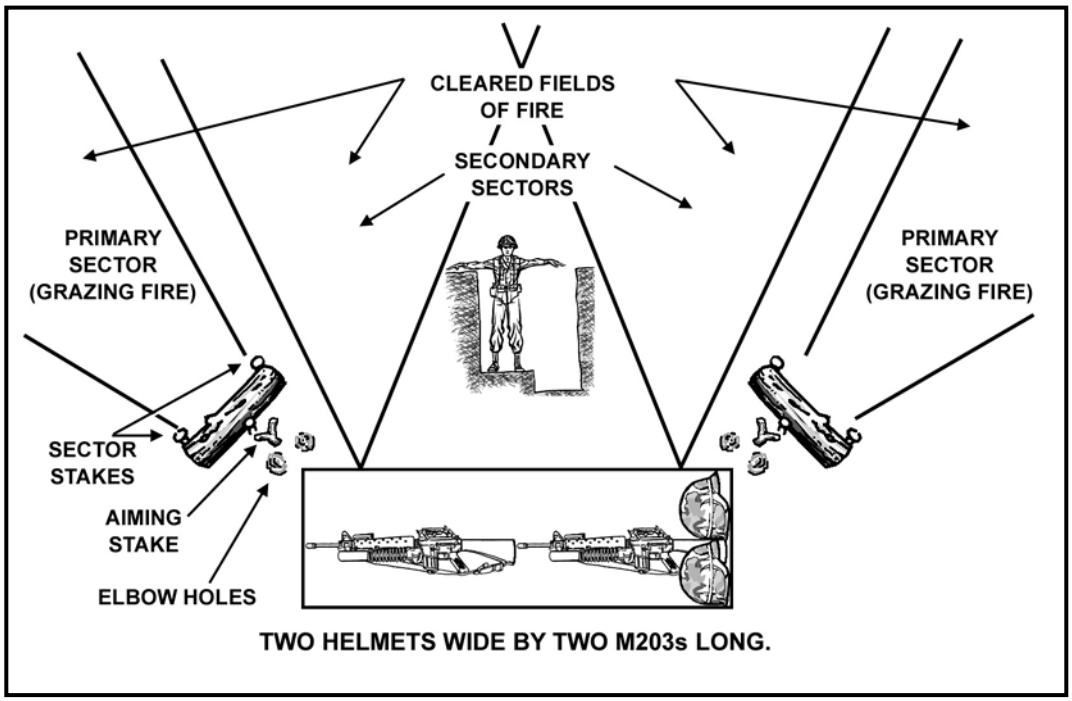

Figure 5-24. Stage 1, Preparations of a fighting position.

STAGE 2: Soldiers prepare retaining walls (Figure 5-25) for the parapets. They ensure that—

- There is a minimum distance (equal to the width of one helmet) from the edge of the hole to the beginning of the front, flank, and rear cover.
- The cover to the front consists of sandbags (or logs), two to three high. For a two-soldier position, it is about two M203 lengths long.
- The cover to the flanks is the same height, but only one M203 rifle long.
- The cover to the rear is one sandbag high and one M203 long.
- If logs are used, they must be held firmly in place with strong stakes.
- The leader inspects the retaining wall.

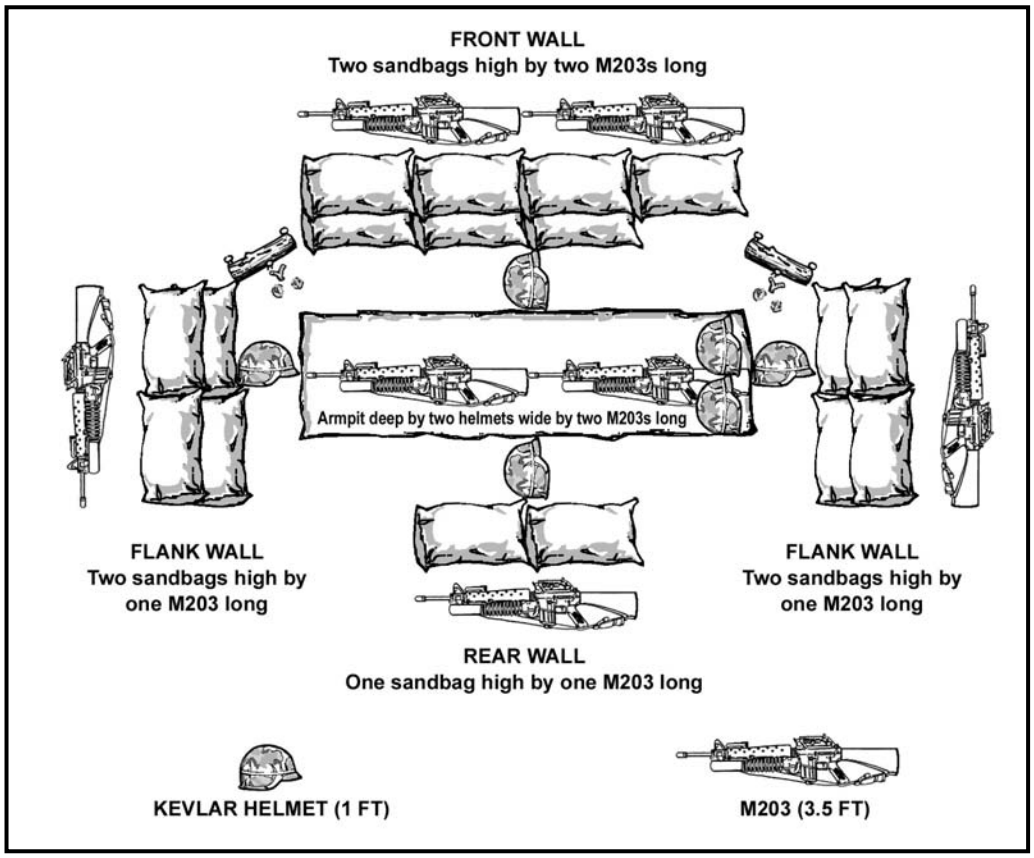

Figure 5-25. Stage 2, Preparations of a fighting position.

STAGE 3: Soldiers dig the position and throw dirt forward of the parapet retaining walls and pack it down hard (Figure 5-26, page 5-50). They—

- Dig the position armpit deep (tallest soldier).
- Fill the parapets in order of front, flanks, and rear.
- Camouflage the parapets and the entire position.
- Dig grenade sumps and slope the floor toward them.
- Dig storage areas for the two rucksacks into the rear wall if needed.
- Ensure the leader inspects the work.

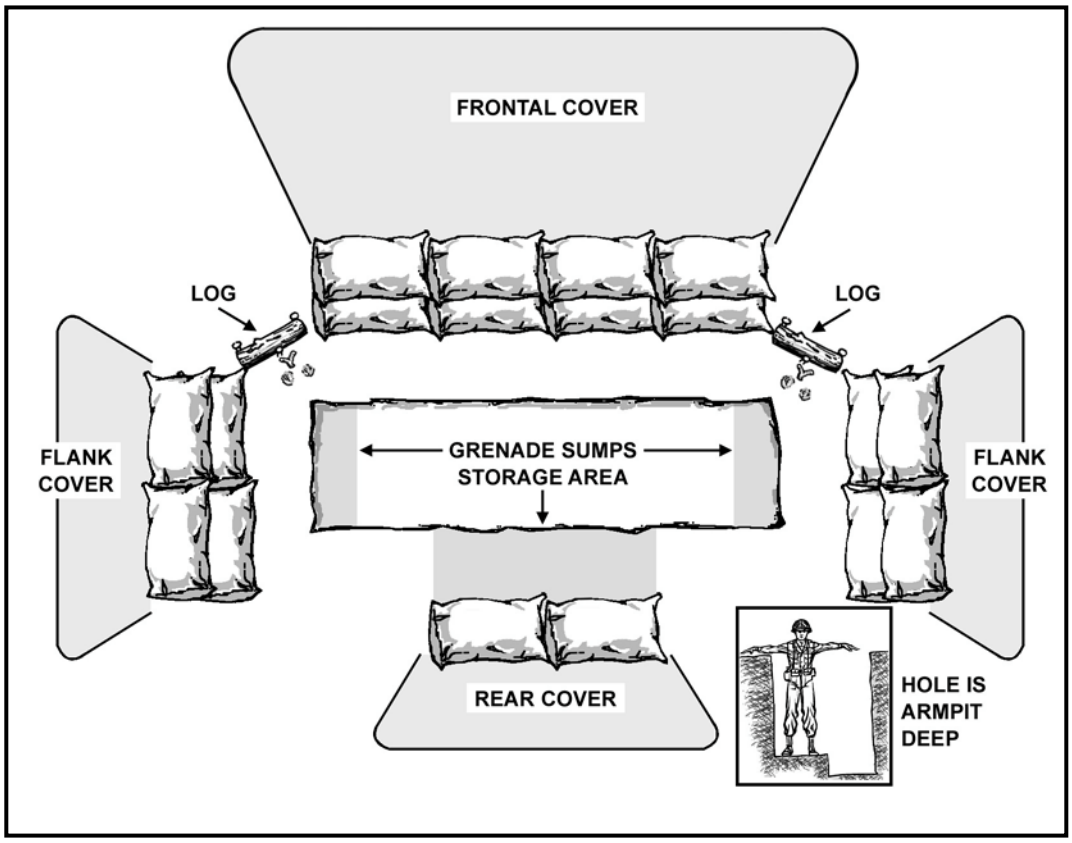

Figure 5-26. Stage 3, Preparations of a fighting position.

STAGE 4: Soldiers prepare the overhead cover (Figure 5-27). They—

- Always provide solid support for overhead cover. Build the support using 4 to 6-inch logs on top of each other running the full length of the front and rear cover.
- Place five or six logs 4 to 6 inches in diameter and two M203s long over the center of the position, resting them on the overhead cover support, not the sandbags.
- Place waterproofing (plastic bags, ponchos) on top of these logs.
- Put a minimum of 18 inches of packed dirt or sandbags on top of the logs.
- Camouflage the overhead cover and the bottom of the position.
- Ensure the leader inspects the position.

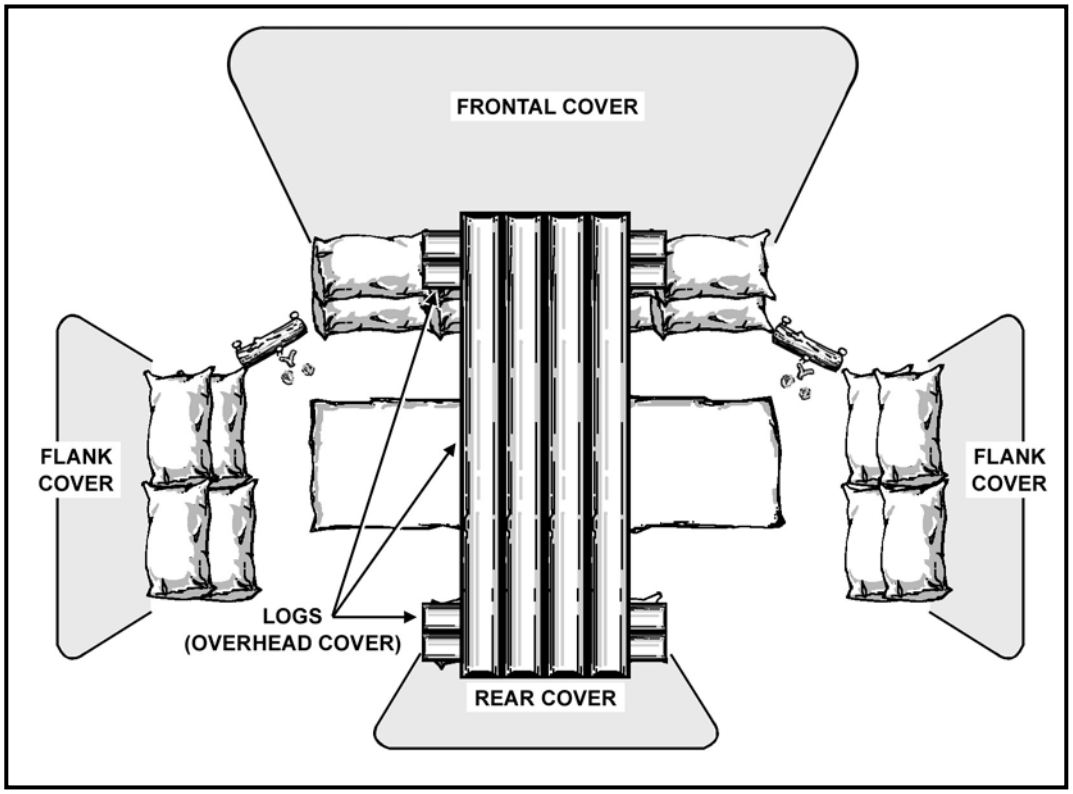

Figure 5-27. Stage 4, Preparations of a fighting position.

c. **Leaders Inspect All Positions.** Leaders must ensure their soldiers build fighting positions that are both effective and safe. An improperly sited position cannot be used and an improperly constructed position is a danger to its occupants.

5-39. STANDARD DESIGNS

When expecting an immediate enemy attack, Infantrymen dig hasty fighting positions. As time becomes available, these are improved, enlarged and strengthened, a process that continues as long as the unit occupies a defensive position. Because the battlefield conditions confronting Infantrymen are never standard, there is no single standard fighting position design that fits all tactical situations.

a. Sometimes, soldiers must construct fighting positions using only the basic tools and materials they can carry or find in the local area, such as entrenching tools, sandbags and locally cut timber. At other times, significant amounts of Class IV construction materials and heavier digging tools may be available.

b. At times, the terrain will accommodate the construction of a position with overhead cover that protects soldiers from indirect fire fragmentation while allowing them to return fire. Sometimes, especially on open terrain, this is not possible and the entire position must be built below ground level. Although this type position offers excellent protection and concealment to soldiers, it limits their ability to return fire from within a protected area.

c. Infantry fighting positions are normally constructed to hold one, two, or three soldiers. There are special designs adapted for use by machine gun (M240B) and

antiarmor (Javelin) teams. Fighting vehicles in hull- and turret-defilade positions should be integrated into the platoon's defense, although not necessarily adjacent to infantry positions

NOTE: Regardless of the position design, the type of construction materials, the tools available, or the terrain, all fighting positions must incorporate sound engineering construction principles. Unless it is constructed properly, a fighting position can easily collapse and crush or bury the soldiers within. FM 5-103 and FM 5-34 provide excellent information on these principles. Additionally, GTA 05-08-001 and GTA 07-06-001 contain detailed information in easy to use formats.

d. When constructing fighting positions, soldiers should:
- Dig the positions no deeper than armpit deep.
- Fill sandbags no more than 75 percent full.
- Use revetments to support excavations in sandy soil.
- Check stabilization of wall bases.
- Inspect and test the position daily, after heavy rain, and after receiving fire.
- Maintain, repair, and improve positions constantly.
- Keep all vehicles at least five meters away from the position.

5-40. TYPES OF FIGHTING POSITIONS

There are many different types of fighting positions. The number of occupants; types of weapons; tools, materials, and time available; and terrain dictate the type of position.

a. **Hasty Fighting Position**. Soldiers prepare hasty fighting positions when there is little or no time before contact with the enemy is expected (Figure 5-28). They locate them behind whatever cover is available and where they can engage the enemy. The position should give frontal protection from direct fire while allowing fire to the front and oblique. Occupying a hasty position does not mean there is no digging. Soldiers can dig hasty positions in only a few minutes. A hasty fighting position just 18 inches deep will provide a significant amount of protection from direct fire and even fragmentation. Hasty positions may be the first step in the construction of more elaborate positions.

Figure 5-28. Hasty fighting position.

b. **One-Soldier Fighting Position**. Positions that contain only a single soldier are the least desirable, but they are useful in some situations. They may be required to cover exceptionally wide frontages. They should never be positioned out of sight of adjacent positions. The one-solder position allows choices in the use of cover. The hole only needs to be large enough for one soldier and his gear. It does not have the security of a two-soldier position. The one-soldier fighting position (Figure 5-29) should allow the soldier to fire to the front or to the oblique from behind frontal cover.

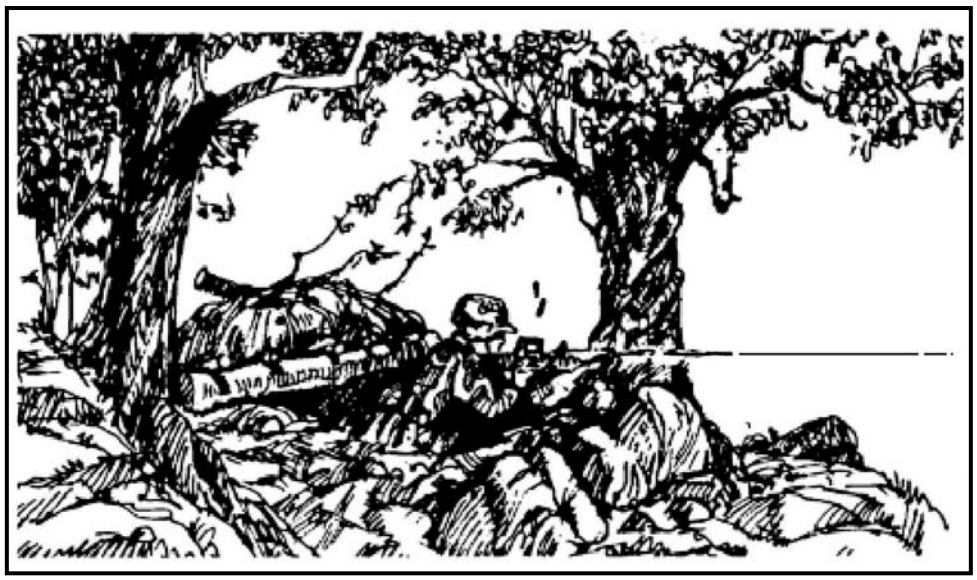

Figure 5-29. One-soldier fighting position.

c. **Two-Soldier Fighting Position.** A two-soldier fighting position (Figure 5-30, page 5-54) is normally more effective than a one-soldier position. It can be used to provide mutual support to adjacent positions on both flanks as well as cover dead space immediately in front of the position. One or both ends of the hole may extend around the sides of the frontal cover. Modifying a position in this way allows both soldiers to have better observation and to have greater fields of fire to the front. Also, during rest or eating periods, one soldier can watch the entire sector while the other sleeps or eats. If they receive fire from their front, they can move back to gain the protection of the frontal cover. By moving about 1 meter, the soldiers can continue to find and hit targets to the front during lulls in enemy fire. This type of position requires more digging and is harder to camouflage. It also provides a better target for enemy hand grenades.

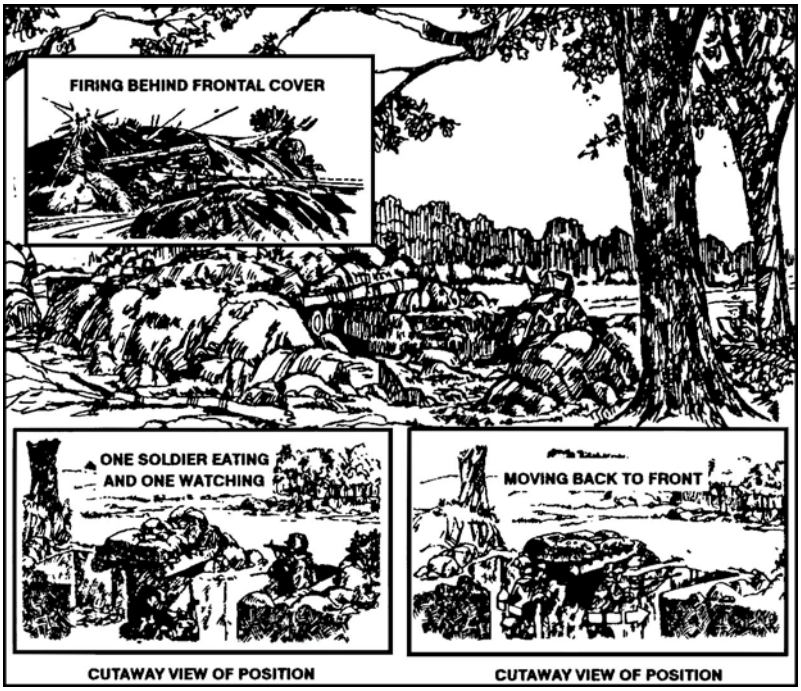

Figure 5-30. Two-soldier fighting position.

d. **Three-Soldier Fighting Position**. A three-soldier position has several advantages. A leader can be in each position, making command and control easier. It supports continuous security operations better than other positions. One soldier can provide security; one can do priority work; and one can rest, eat, or perform maintenance. This allows the priority of work to be completed more quickly than in a one- or two-soldier position. This position allows the platoon to maintain combat power and security without shifting personnel or leaving positions unmanned. It provides 360-degree observation and fire, and it is more difficult for the enemy to destroy because he must kill or suppress three soldiers.

(1) When using three-soldier positions, the leader must consider several things. Either the distance between positions must be increased or the size of the squad's sector must be reduced. The choice depends mainly on visibility and fields of fire. Because the squad leader is in a fighting position that will most likely be engaged during the battle, he cannot exert personal control over the other two positions. The squad leader controls the battle by—

- Clearly communicating his plans and intent to his squad to include control measures and fire plans.
- Using prearranged signals like flares, whistles, or tracers.
- Positioning key weapons in his fighting position.
- Placing his fighting position so it covers key or decisive terrain.
- Placing his fighting position where his team might be able to act as a reserve.

(2) The three-soldier emplacement is a T-position. This basic design can be changed by adding or deleting berms, changing the orientation of the T, or shifting the position of the third soldier to form an L instead of a T (Figure 5-31). The layout of the position can be oriented to fire on expected enemy avenues of approach from any direction. Berms

must not block observation or fire into assigned primary or alternate sectors. Care must be taken to properly support the overhead cover.

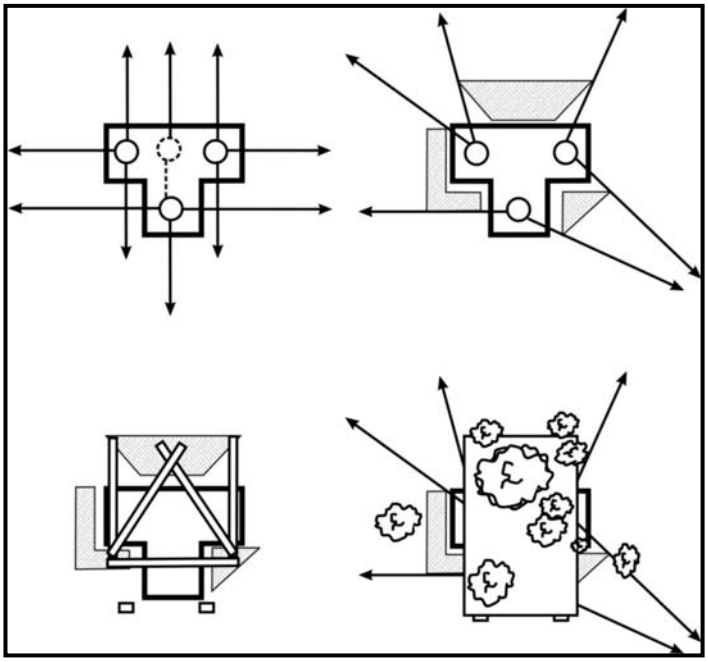

Figure 5-31. Three-soldier T-position.

e. **Machine Gun Position.** The primary sector of fire is usually to the oblique so a machine gun can fire across the platoon's front. The tripod is used on the side covering the primary sector of fire. The bipod legs are used on the side covering the secondary sector of fire. When changing from primary to secondary sectors, the gunner moves only the machine gun. Occasionally a sector of fire that allows firing directly to the front is assigned, but this can reduce the frontal cover for the crew when firing to the oblique (Figure 5-32). (For a detailed discussion on the employment of the M240B refer to Appendix B)

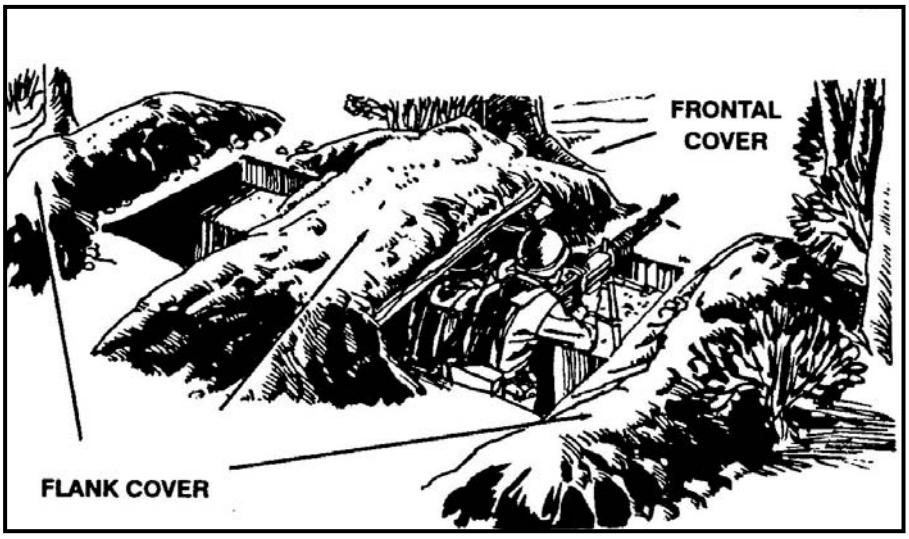

Figure 5-32. Machine gun position.

(1) After the platoon leader positions the machine gun, he marks the position of the tripod legs and the limits of the sectors of fire. The crew then traces the outline of the hole and the frontal cover (if it must be improved).

(2) The crew digs firing platforms first to lessen their exposure in case they must fire before they complete the position. The platforms must not be so low that the gun cannot be traversed across its entire sector of fire, reducing the profile of the gunner when firing and reducing the frontal cover height.

(3) After digging the firing platforms, the crew digs the hole. They first place the dirt where frontal cover is needed, digging the hole deep enough to protect them and still allow the gunner to fire with comfort (usually about armpit deep). When the frontal cover is high enough and thick enough, the crew uses the rest of the dirt to build flank and rear cover. Trench-shaped grenade sumps are dug at various points so either soldier can kick a grenade into one if needed. Overhead cover for a machine gun position is built the same as for a two-soldier position.

NOTE: In some positions, a machine gun might not have a secondary sector of fire. In this case, dig only half the position.

(4) When there is a three-soldier crew for a machine gun, the ammunition bearer digs a one-soldier fighting position to the flank that is connected to the gun position by a crawl trench. From his position, the ammunition bearer can see and fire to the front and to the oblique. Usually, the ammunition bearer is on the same side as the FPL or PDF. This allows him to see and fire his rifle into the machine gun's secondary sector and to see the gunner and assistant gunner.

f. **Javelin Position.** The Javelin can be employed from hasty or completed positions (Figure 5-33). However, some changes are required. (For a detailed discussion on the employment of the Javelin refer to Appendix F)

Figure 5-33. Javelin position.

(1) The gunner must keep the weapon at least 6 inches above the ground to allow room for the stabilizing fins to unfold. The hole is only waist deep to allow the gunner to move while tracking a target. Because the Javelin gunner must be above ground level, the frontal cover should be high enough to hide his head and, if possible, the backblast of the Javelin. A hole is dug in front of the position for the bipod legs.

(2) When the Javelin can be fired in one direction only, the position is adjusted to have cover and concealment from all other directions, and it should be fired to the oblique. This protects the position from frontal fire and allows engagement of the target from the flank. Both ends of the launcher must extend out over the edges of the hole.

(3) Overhead cover must be built on the flanks. Cover must be large enough for the gunner, the tracker, and the missiles. Overhead cover that allows fire from underneath can be built if the backblast area is clear. Overhead cover must be well camouflaged.

(4) The Javelin is an important weapon and is easy to detect, therefore selection and preparation of alternate positions have a high priority. When preparing an alternate position, the gunner should select and improve a covered route to it so he can move to the position under fire.

g. **AT4.** The AT4 can be fired from infantry fighting positions. If the AT4 is to be fired from a two-soldier position, the gunner must ensure the other soldier is not in the backblast area. The front edge of a fighting position is a good elbow rest to help the gunner steady the weapon and to gain accuracy. When firing the AT4, the gunner leans against the rear wall. His elbows are not supported.

5-41. VEHICLE POSITIONS

Vehicles use natural cover and concealment in hide positions initially to increase survivability. As time, assets, and situation permit, positions are prepared using organic excavation equipment or engineer support. Priority is given to those vehicles containing essential equipment or supplies. Crews use these fighting positions for individual protection as well.

a. Parapets positioned at the front of or around major weapon systems provide improved protection from direct fire and from blast and fragments of indirect fire, artillery, mortar, and rocket shells. At its base, the parapet should be at least 8 feet thick. The parapet functions as a standoff barrier for impact-detonating direct fire HEAT and ATGM projectiles. The parapet should cause the fuzes to activate, thereby increasing survivability for the protected vehicles. If the enemy uses kinetic energy, direct fire armor-piercing, or hypervelocity projectiles, it is impractical to construct parapets thick enough for protection. To protect against these projectiles, deep-cut, hull defilade, or turret defilade positions are prepared. Fighting and protective positions for essential vehicles should be constructed no larger than needed.

b. Battlefield success requires maneuver among fighting positions between main gun firings. Maximum use of terrain is required to conceal fighting vehicles maneuvering among fighting positions. After a major weapon system fires its main gun, the vehicle should move concealed to another position before firing again. If the major weapon system immediately reappears in the old position, the enemy knows where to fire his next round.

(1) Hasty fighting positions for combat vehicles, including armored personnel carriers (APCs) and mortar carriers, take advantage of natural terrain features. These positions are prepared with a minimum of construction effort. A frontal parapet, as high as practical without interfering with the vehicle's weapon systems, shields the position from frontal attack and provides limited concealment if properly camouflaged. Protection is improved if the position is made deeper and the parapet extended around the vehicle's sides. Parapets provide a false sense of security against kinetic energy and hypervelocity

projectiles; therefore, hasty vehicle fighting positions with parapets are not recommended for tanks and BFVs. Hasty fighting positions offer protection from HEAT projectiles and provide limited concealment if properly camouflaged. As the tactical situation permits, hasty positions are improved to deliberate positions.

(2) Deliberate fighting positions are required to protect a vehicle from kinetic energy and hypervelocity projectiles. The position is constructed in four parts: hull defilade, concealed access ramp or route, hide location, and turret defilade (Figures 5-34, 5-35, and 5-36).

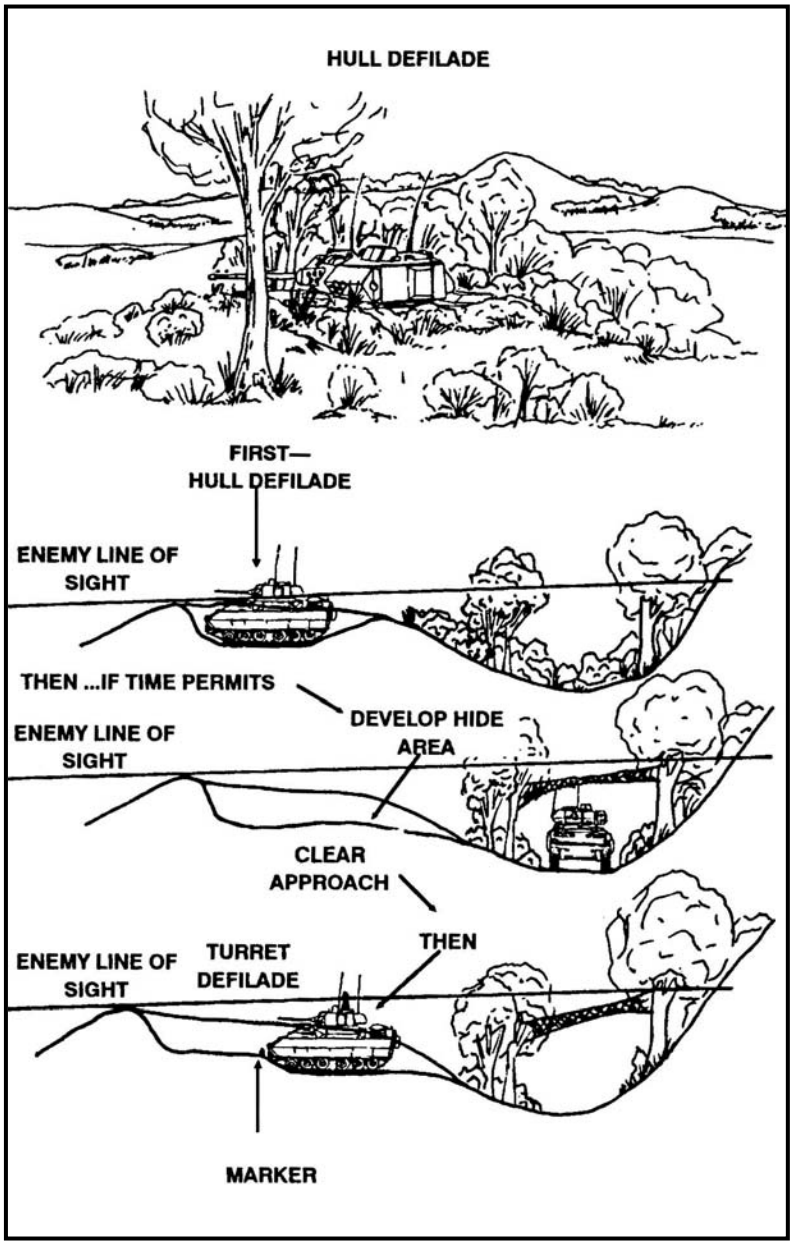

Figure 5-34. Developing deliberate fighting positions.

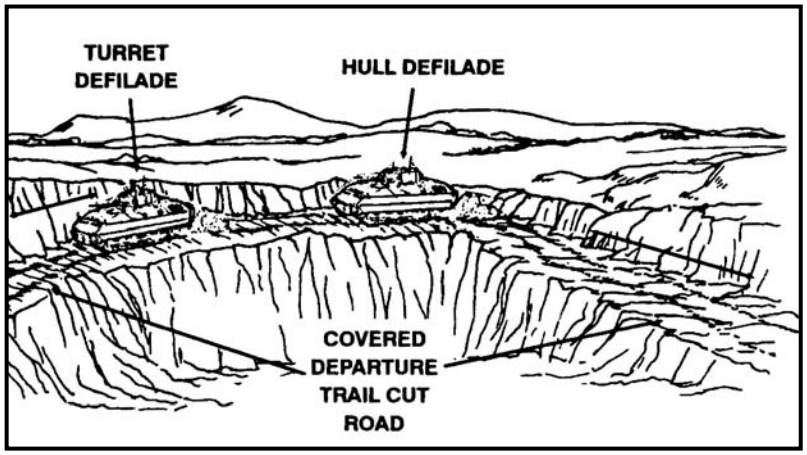

Figure 5-35. Enhanced natural position.

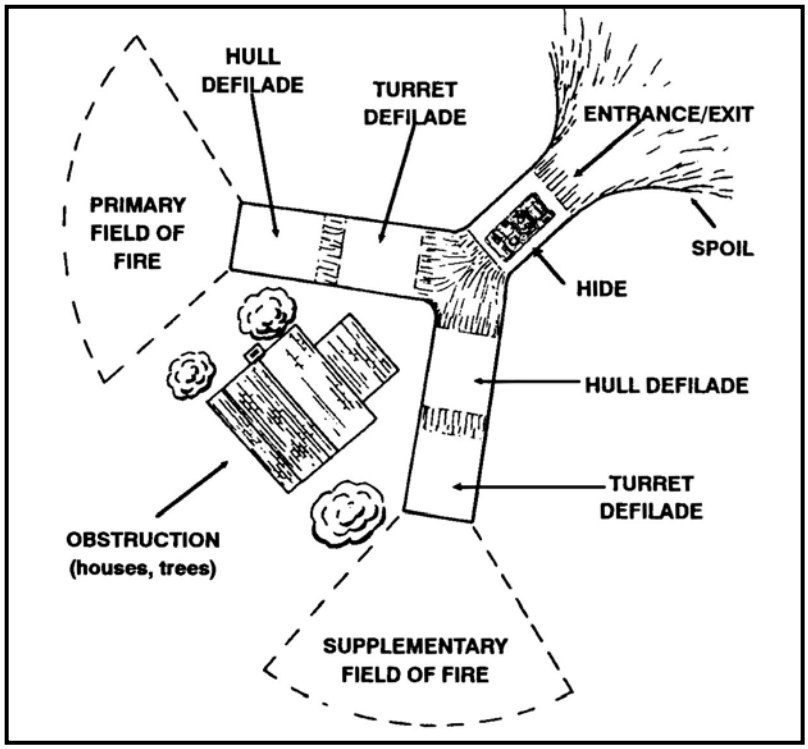

Figure 5-36. Top view of Y-shaped fighting position.

c. Positions formed by natural terrain are best because they are easy to modify. If preparation is necessary, extensive engineer support is required. Each position is camouflaged with either natural vegetation or a camouflage net, and the spoil is flattened out or hauled away. All fighting positions for fighting vehicles (tanks, BFVs) are planned as deliberate positions. Since the lack of time usually does not allow full construction of a deliberate position, only some parts of the position are prepared. For example, the complete fighting position for a BFV requires the construction of a hull defilade, turret defilade, concealed access ramp or route, and hide location all within the same position.

The maneuver team commander uses organic and engineer earthmoving assets and usually constructs part of the fighting position.

d. Digging hide locations and concealed routes between fighting positions is normally not practical due to the lack of engineer assets and time. Engineer assets are used to dig the hull and turret defilade positions. The ramps and concealed routes require only partial clearing and leveling with blade tanks or engineer equipment because natural concealed routes and hide locations are used. If time permits, the commander expands the fighting position to all four parts, including a hide and turret defilade location. The access ramp from the hide location to the hull defilade position usually provides turret defilade for a vehicle at some point on the ramp. This location can be marked with engineer tape and a chemical light so the driver knows when to stop.

5-42. TRENCHES

When there is time and help available, trenches should be dug to connect fighting positions so soldiers can move by covered routes. The depth of a trench depends on the type of help and equipment available. Without engineer help, platoons dig crawl trenches (about 3 feet deep by 2 feet wide) With engineer help, they dig standard trenches. The trench should zigzag so the enemy cannot fire down a long section. Platoons normally dig crawl trenches because engineer assets are usually limited. Platoons use crawl trenches to conceal their movement into and within positions to provide minimum protection. Spoil is placed on parapets, normally on each side of the trench. If the trench runs across a forward slope, all the spoil is placed on the enemy side to make the forward parapet higher. All spoil needs careful concealment from enemy direct observation (Figure 5-37).

Figure 5-37. Crawl trenches.